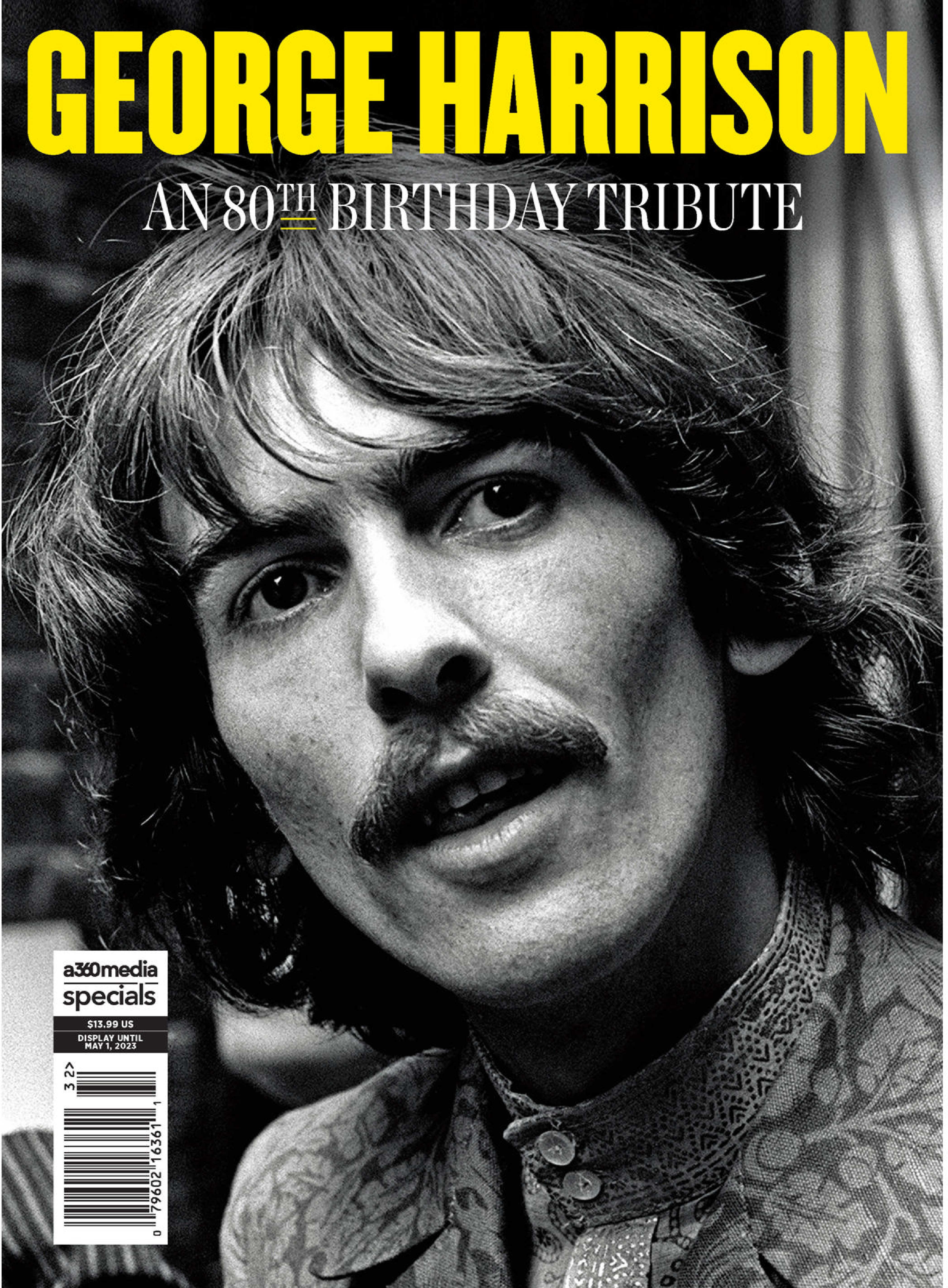
GEORGE HARRISON

AN 80TH BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE



a360media
specials
$13.99 US
DISPLAY UNTIL
MAY 1, 2023

3 2>
0 79602 16361 1

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

GEORGE HARRISON

AN 80TH BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE

CONTENTS

4
INTRODUCTION: WHY WE LOVE GEORGE
Remembering the most interesting Beatle of them all

6
CHAPTER 1: THE BUS CONDUCTOR'S SON
Before he became the youngest Beatle, George was the youngest child in a family of modest means

12
CHAPTER 2: GEORGE & PAUL
The longest friendship in the Beatles was not always easy to maintain

18
CHAPTER 3: GEORGE & JOHN
Harrison learned a lot from hanging around Lennon

24
CHAPTER 4: GEORGE & RINGO
Harrison enjoyed his most enduring bond with the last Beatle to join the band

30
CHAPTER 5: THE QUIET LEADER
Six ways George profoundly influenced the Beatles

36
CHAPTER 6: MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL
George's perspective on his life as a Beatle

42
CHAPTER 7: ALL THINGS MUST PASS
George's first post-Beatles solo album showcased his immense talent

48
CHAPTER 8: LIFELONG FRIENDS
George built lasting musical relationships beyond the Fab Four

54
CHAPTER 9: GEORGE IN TELEVISION AND FILM
After the Beatles, Harrison took an active interest in screens big and small

60
CHAPTER 10: A MAN OF MANY PASSIONS
When George liked something, he went all in

66
CHAPTER 11: LOVES OF HIS LIFE
George eventually found his own version of domestic bliss

72
CHAPTER 12: GEORGE'S MUSIC
The stories behind six of George's most iconic songs

78
CHAPTER 13: A QUEST FOR MEANING
George sought spiritual health—and defined it—on his own terms

84
CHAPTER 14: ALL CREDIT TO GEORGE
Amazing facts about George Harrison

90
CHAPTER 15: FINDING PEACE
George Harrison's life was complex

THE HONEST BEATLE
Guitarist George Harrison (right, circa 1973) was the youngest member to join the Beatles, and they never let him forget it.

WHY WE LOVE GEORGE

Remembering the most interesting Beatle of them all

When Beatlemania first swept through the world, adding new enthusiasts with every mop-top shake of the head and rock-redefining chord, legions of fans—especially those in America—needed a bit of help answering two basic questions: Which Beatle was which, and how are they different?

The musical comedy *A Hard Day's Night*—rushed into production and released in the U.S. in August 1964, just six months after the band buzzed through American living rooms on *The Ed Sullivan Show*—offered easy answers: John was the sometimes surly leader, Paul was cute, Ringo was like a playful puppy, and George... he was the quiet one.

First impressions often stick, even fictitious ones made for the movies. The truth is George Harrison never had a problem with words. A man of many interests, he could talk about his passions with endless enthusiasm. Sure, he was humble, private, and less inclined to "put on a show" than his bandmates. He was also the youngest member of the band, which often meant he was treated like a kid. But if easy labels are to be revisited almost 60 years after rock's British Invasion, it might go something like this:

George Harrison was the honest Beatle.

The evidence was always there, available to anyone who cared to know. "I asked to be successful," he told Maureen Cleave of *London Evening Standard* in March 1966. "I never asked to be famous; I can tell you I got more famous than I wanted to be. I never intended to be the Big Cheese."

George's life obviously changed because of the Beatles. But he worked extremely hard to make sure the Beatles didn't change him—a never-ending diligence for the majority of his life. The result was an exceedingly interesting human being who most fans only partly know. He taught himself to play 26 instruments. He collected garden gnomes. He produced successful films. He pioneered the rock benefit concert. He sold nearly 10 million records as a solo artist. He even deserves credit for giving us the Rolling Stones: He recommended them to Decca Records executive Dick Rowe, the man who famously turned down the Beatles.

Along the way, he took frenzied fame and transformed it into a spiritual examination of life itself. And when he left this world early—on Nov. 29, 2001, at age 58—he did so with no regrets and no feelings for those he was leaving behind other than love.

As we pay tribute to George on what would have been his 80th birthday, a fitting way to honor him is to follow his advice and live in the here and now. It's a timeless message, one that's as challenging and complex as George himself, but also as simple and soothing as the sounds of "Here Comes the Sun."

CHAPTER 1

THE BUS CONDUCTOR'S SON

Before he became the youngest Beatle, George was the youngest child in a family of modest means

George Harrison (left) plays his acoustic guitar at his childhood home in Liverpool, England, in the mid-1950s.

CHAPTER 1

MAMA'S BABY
George—the youngest of four Harrison children—dances with his mother, Louise, at the premiere of *A Hard Day's Night* in 1964.

WHEN LOUISE HARRISON WAS PREGNANT

with her son George, World War II was raging. She listened to Radio India every Sunday, hoping the beautiful sounds of the sitar and tablas would be better for her unborn baby than the harrowing noise of air-raid sirens and fighter planes. On Feb. 25, 1943, George was born in a home with no central heating and a backyard toilet in the working-class Liverpool neighborhood of Wavertree.

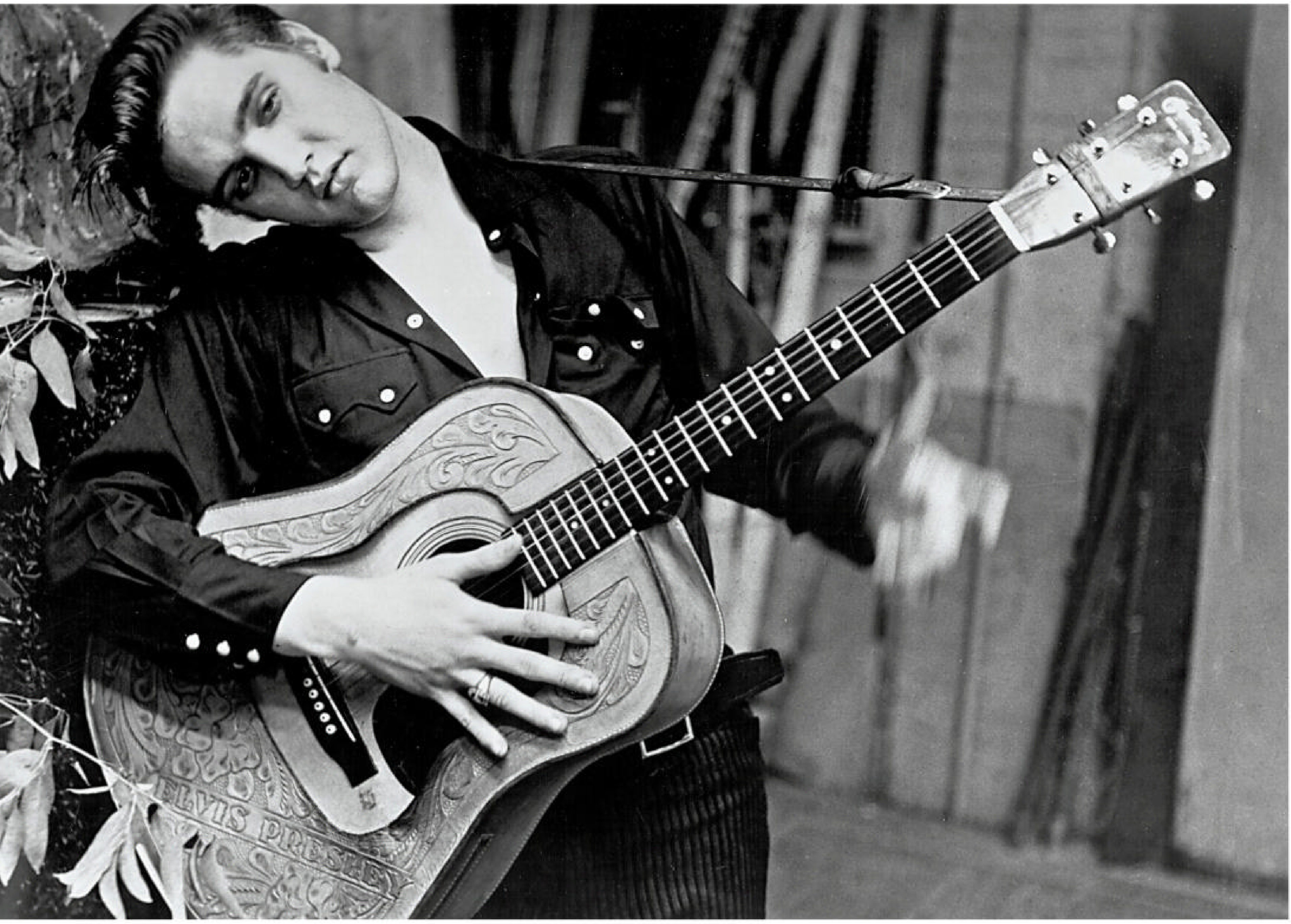
Baby George took baths in a zinc tub filled with stove-warmed water. His father, Harold, was a bus conductor who later became responsible for scheduling Liverpool's approximately 6,000 buses. Harold did all he could for his family, which included George's older siblings—brothers Harold Jr. and Peter and sister Louise. Instead of buying a new radio, Harold and his brother-in-law jerry-rigged one—giving the family a modest gateway to the world.

Eventually, the war ended and the hard process of recovery began. With little money for extravagances, young George loved to rush home after school to play his favorite records—many of them country songs by American artists like Jimmie Rodgers and Slim Whitman—on his family's gramophone. When George was 6 years old, after being on a waiting list for years, the Harrisons moved into a home with an indoor toilet in Speke. Here, George began playing the guitar.

Advertised as "the cheapest Model in our range," George's starter instrument was an acoustic Egmond made in Holland. (Accounts vary as to how he acquired it.) At first, the guitar held little sway with the future Beatle. He once practiced until 2 a.m., but couldn't master it and quit in tears of frustration. George inadvertantly unscrewed the neck from the

THE KING
In 1956, Harrison discovered rock 'n' roll when he heard Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel."

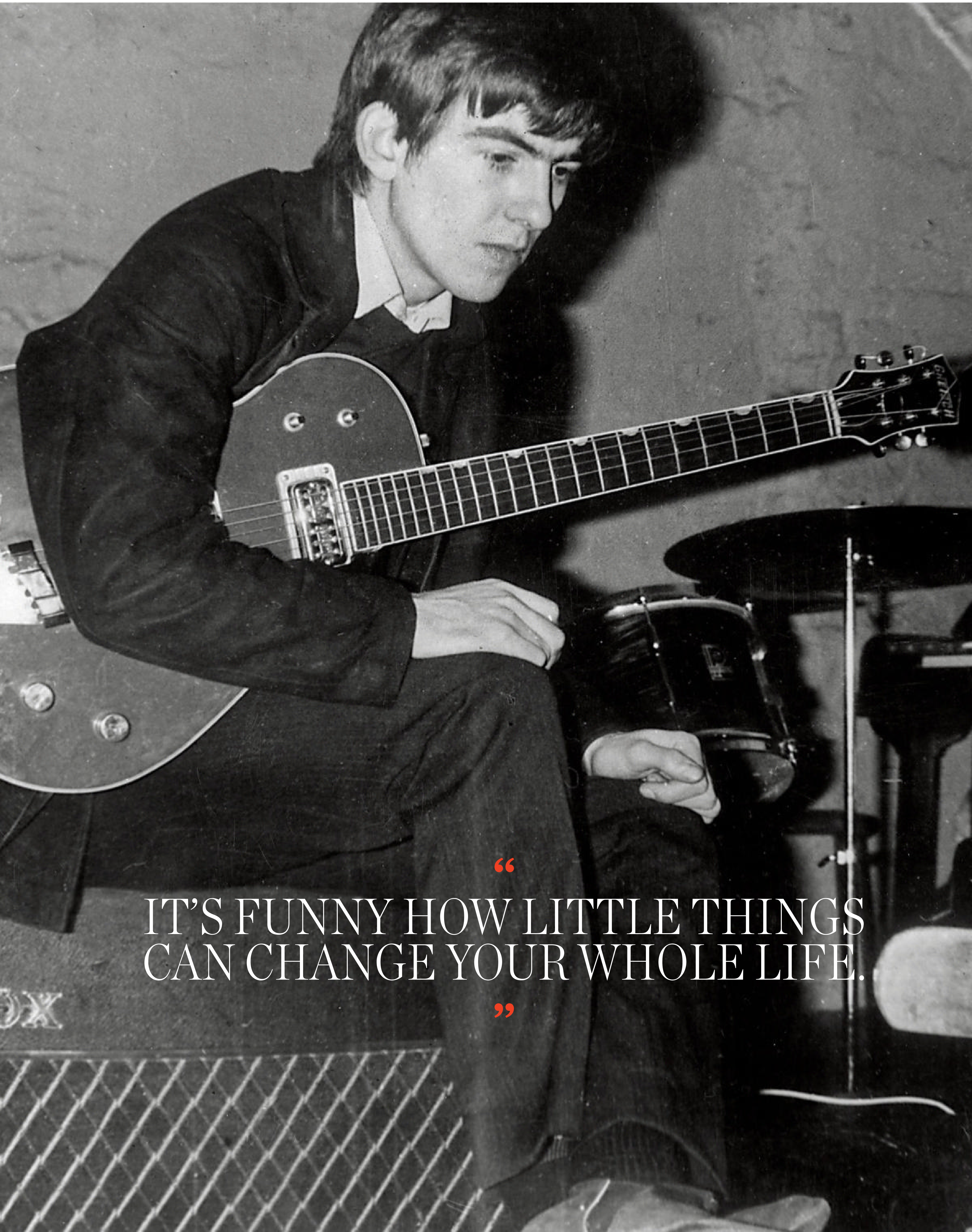
YOUNG REBELS
By 1959, Harrison formed his skiffle band, The Rebels, with his brother Peter and friend Arthur Kelly.



body of the Egmond and put it in a cupboard, but Peter discovered the "cheapo" instrument and fixed it. George then started weekly lessons with one of his father's friends.

In 1954, George began attending the Liverpool Institute—he was the only member of his family to pass the prestigious school's entrance examination. But George didn't like school, and he was also frequently ill. When he was 13, he missed six weeks with kidney inflammation. That year, 1956, George also discovered something that he found much more interesting than his studies: rock 'n' roll. Riding on his bike one day, Harrison heard Elvis' "Heartbreak Hotel" emanating from a nearby house, and years later, George pinpointed this as a milestone event in his life. In 1959, Harrison formed a skiffle band, The Rebels, with friend Arthur Kelly and brother Peter; they earned 10 shillings at their first gig. "It's funny how little things can change your whole life," Harrison once said about the guitar.

Soon, another "little" happenstance also altered his destiny. The bus conductor's son met a fellow rider on his route. That boy, Paul McCartney, was a grade above George but he liked rock 'n' roll too. He was also in a band—one that he thought George might be perfect for, if he was willing to give it a try.



> “IT’S FUNNY HOW LITTLE THINGS CAN CHANGE YOUR WHOLE LIFE.”

CHAPTER 2

GEORGE & PAUL

The longest friendship in the Beatles was not always easy to maintain

George Harrison's friendship with Paul McCartney may have led to his audition with the Beatles, but their friendship had its share of rocky times.

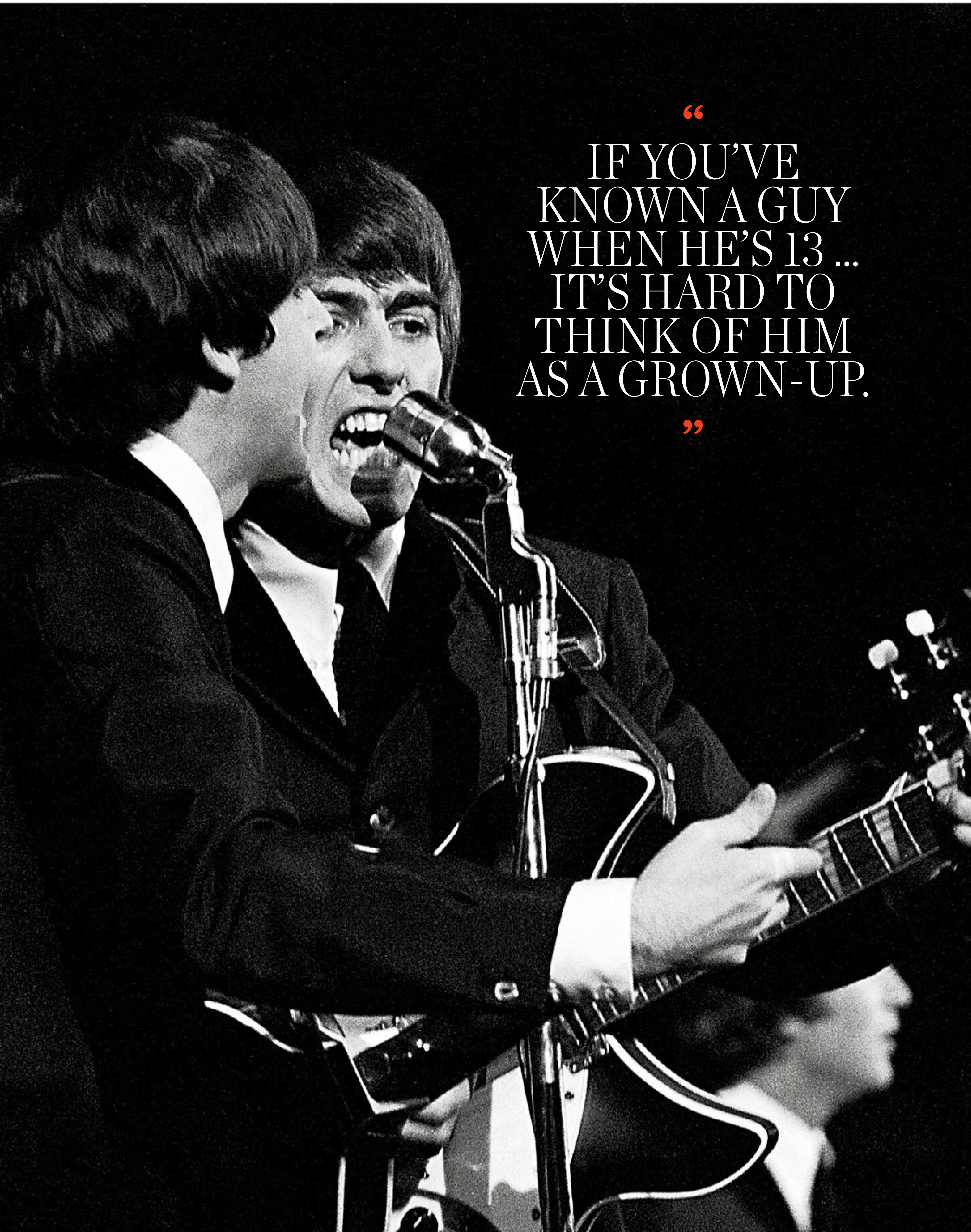
EARLY DAYS
Bassist Paul McCartney (left) and George Harrison perform at the Star-Club during one of the Beatles' early gigs, circa 1962.

THE RIDE TO AND FROM LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE

took an hour on the No. 86 bus. George recognized Paul McCartney as a schoolmate because he wore the same uniform. Soon, the two were meeting on the upper deck where McCartney would go to smoke a pipe. On their long rides together, George and Paul discovered a shared love of music. Harrison took out his guitar and impressed McCartney with all the chords he knew. In the 2011 Harrison documentary *Living in the Material World*, McCartney recalled Harrison as being "a cocky little guy with a good sense of himself; he wasn't cowed by anything."

Paul genuinely liked George, but he was also eight months older—a fact he never let Harrison forget. "If you've known a guy when he's 13, and you're 14, it's hard to think of him as a grown-up," McCartney said in *The Beatles Anthology*. The two started jamming together at each other's houses, even after McCartney moved across Liverpool from the Speke section to Allerton in 1957. By then, they rode bicycles to their respective homes, about a 20-minute journey. They listened to records by the Everly Brothers and Buddy Holly, and they learned to play Bach and Gershwin.

Trixon



“

IF YOU’VE
KNOWN A GUY
WHEN HE’S 13 ...
IT’S HARD TO
THINK OF HIM
AS A GROWN-UP.

”

BEATLES INVASION Paul McCartney and George Harrison (left) share a mike onstage during opening night of the Beatles' 1964 U.S. tour in San Francisco.

BACK ON THE BUS McCartney and Harrison (below), who met on the local bus to school as kids, sit next to each other on the Beatles tour bus.

At the time, McCartney was in a skiffle band called the Quarrymen, led by an older teenager named John Lennon. "I'd been invited to see them play several times by Paul, but for some reason never got round to it before," Harrison said years later about seeing his first Quarrymen show.

In early 1958, McCartney invited Harrison to try out for the Quarrymen. Lennon thought that George was too young. But McCartney persisted, and Lennon agreed to give Harrison an audition, which took place on the top deck of a double-decker bus. Harrison launched into Bill Justis' rhythm and blues instrumental "Raunchy." Lennon's simple response was: "You're in." Not long afterward, the Quarrymen broke up and the Liverpudlian lads eventually started calling themselves the Silver Beetles, and in time, the Beatles.

As the years progressed, Harrison's friendship with McCartney was by turns sweet and tumultuous. On Jan. 21, 1966, when Harrison married his first wife, model Pattie Boyd, McCartney was one of his best men—and the only Beatle in attendance. But the relationship was often strained by Paul's disregard for George's feelings, especially as the Beatles blossomed and McCartney became known as a musical genius. "Paul couldn't see beyond himself. He was so on a roll—but it was a roll encompassing his own self," Harrison told *Guitar World* in 1992. "And in his mind, everything that was going on around him was just there to accompany him. He wasn't sensitive to stepping on other people's egos."

It would take years before the two patched things up. But, eventually, they did. To this day, Paul still lovingly refers to George as his "little brother."

Rickenbacker

CHAPTER 3

GEORGE & JOHN

Harrison learned a lot from hanging around Lennon

George Harrison and John Lennon developed a strong bond which grew stronger with time, and as they both followed similar paths to spirituality.

LONGTIME FRIENDS
John Lennon (left) and George Harrison maintained a friendship and even supported each other's solo endeavors post-Beatles.

MOST FANS HAVE LONG BELIEVED

that Harrison's disagreements with McCartney—tensions that were captured on camera in the 1970 documentary *Let It Be*—are what led him to briefly quit the Beatles. But, in January 1969, the same filming session may have missed Harrison and John Lennon trading punches. Harrison denied they came to blows, but Beatles producer George Martin said it happened just out of camera range.

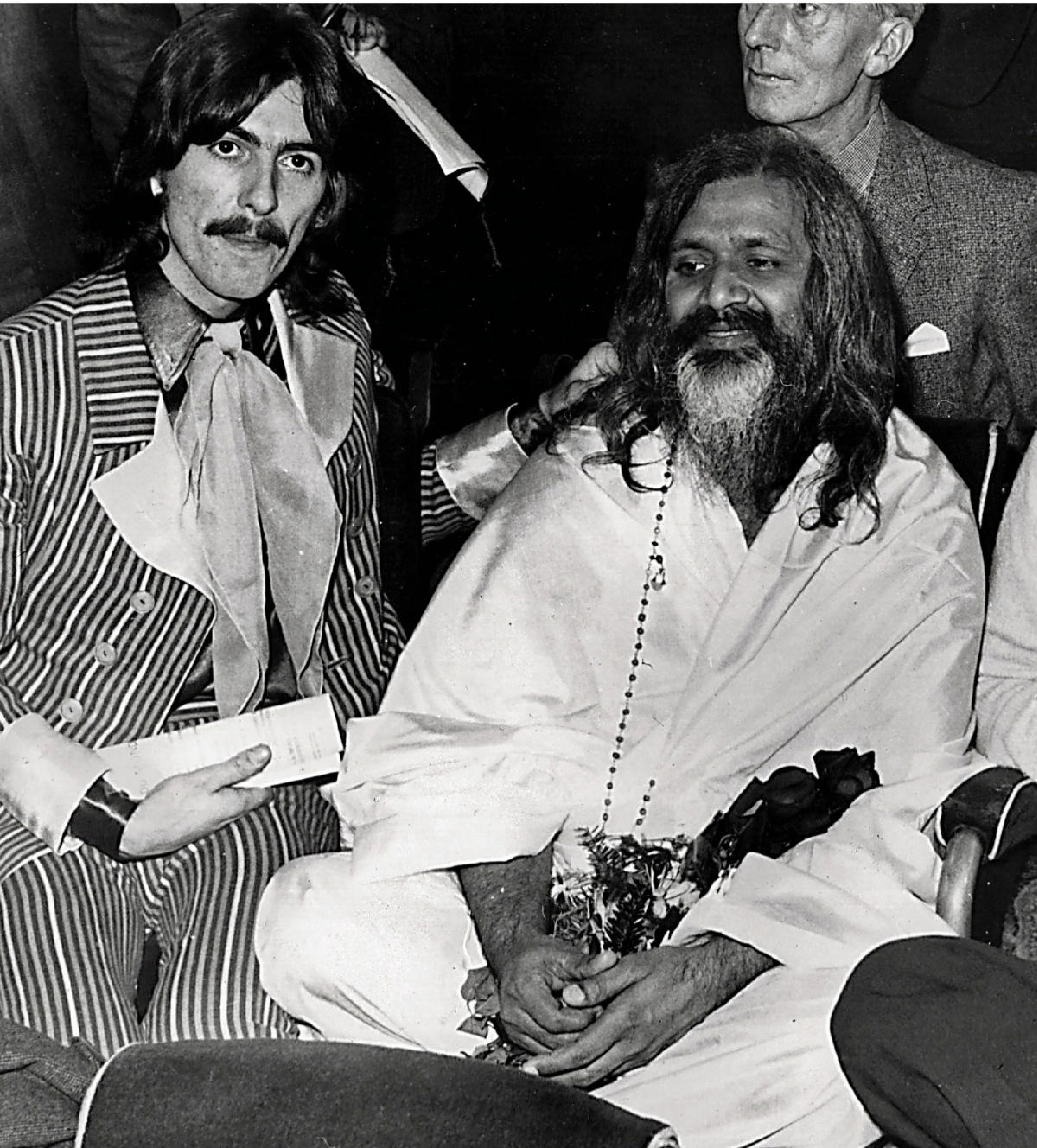
Harrison and Lennon had known each other for over a decade, and anger flared over the musical direction of the Beatles. Paul and John held an iron grasp on songwriting at this point, and George wanted greater say. In the aftermath of the altercation, Harrison said he was leaving the band, and the temperamental Lennon raged that he was going to replace the guitarist with Eric Clapton.

Neither of these threats endured. George returned to the group five days later, and Harrison and Lennon resumed their friendship because they often came together to mend their differences, mainly because of Lennon's knack for contrition. "He'd just deflate any feeling you had against him, any negative feeling," Harrison said.

The two had come a long way from 1958, when Lennon told McCartney that Harrison was too young to join his band. Eventually, of course, John relented. And an unusual kinship developed, one that began with George almost idolizing John, regardless of how Lennon treated him. For example, Lennon often teased Harrison about his big ears. Being the youngest child in his own family, Harrison could take it—which earned Lennon's respect and fondness. It also made Harrison tougher, giving him a bold edge. "I think John had a lot to do with that, you know, cause John Lennon ... if he felt something strongly, he just did it," Harrison explained to a VH1 interviewer several years later. "And you know, I picked up a lot of that by being a friend of John's. Just that attitude of, 'Well, we'll just go for it, just do it.'"

SPIRITUAL BROTHERS Harrison, Indian spiritual guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and John Lennon (below) are pictured at the UNICEF Gala in Paris in 1967.

HIGH HONORS Harrison and Ringo Starr are flanked onstage by Julian Lennon, Sean Lennon and Yoko Ono (right) during the Beatles' Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction in 1988.



Moreover, their friendship grew stronger through a simultaneous quest for spirituality. In 1968, when Harrison convinced his bandmates to attend Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's retreat in India, John seemed to take chanting and meditation the most seriously along with George. Harrison and Lennon also forged a bond over their experiments with LSD, at one point to the detriment of their relationship with McCartney, saying they could no longer relate to him if he didn't also drop acid.

However, there was one dynamic that particularly unified Harrison and Lennon—ganging up on McCartney whenever he pushed them too far. "We got fed up of being sidemen for Paul," Lennon said 45 minutes into an epic, three-hour-plus 1970 interview with *Rolling Stone* founder Jann Wenner.

After the Beatles breakup, Harrison and Lennon exchanged postcards and sang on each other's solo projects. Before Lennon was fatally shot in 1980, it was rumored that the old friends were not on good terms—a spat that may have started when George didn't write of John's influence on him as profusely as Lennon may have felt appropriate in his book *I Me Mine*. Harrison did pay tribute to his former bandmate posthumously ("You were the one who imagined it all") in his 1981 song "All Those Years Ago."

"He was a good lad," Harrison said of Lennon. "There was a part of him that was saintly, that aspired to truth and great things, and there was part of him that was just, you know ... a looney!" It was a blunt assessment, but one that John himself likely would have endorsed.

CHAPTER 4

GEORGE & RINGO

Harrison enjoyed his most enduring bond with the last Beatle to join the band

Ringo Starr and George Harrison maintained a close friendship during their time as bandmates and after—brothers through it all.

FAST FRIENDS
Harrison advocated for Starr to replace drummer Pete Best to become the fourth and final member of the Fab Four.

WHEN RINGO STARR REPLACED PETE BEST

as the Beatles' drummer in August 1962, George Harrison suffered—physically—for his fast friend. Soon after Best was let go, the band played their favorite Liverpool haunt, The Cavern, where fans shouted, "Pete forever, Ringo never." Some say that after the gig, an angry fan headbutted Harrison outside the band room, leaving George with a black eye. Ringo's former band, Rory Storm and the Hurricanes, shared a bill with the Beatles in in 1961, and Harrison advocated for Starr to become the last of the Fab Four.

"Pete kept being sick and not showing up for gigs so we would get Ringo to sit in with the band instead, and every time Ringo sat in, it seemed like 'this is it,'" Harrison said in *The Beatles Anthology*. "Eventually we realized, 'We should get Ringo in the band full time.'"

Lennon and McCartney may have shared the most high-profile friendship in the Beatles, but Harrison and Starr shared a special bond. However, Harrison purposely didn't room with Starr on the road as he didn't want to meddle with the band's balance.

In early 1968, Starr felt the other three band members were really close, and that he wasn't playing well. So, he decided to quit during recording sessions for what is known to all as *The White Album*. When Ringo went to tell each of the other Beatles individually, George, John and Paul all said they thought the other three were close and he was the outlier. Starr went on holiday in Sardinia and upon his return, Harrison had filled the studio with flowers as a token of appreciation. "That was a beautiful moment for me," Starr said in Martin Scorsese's 2011 Harrison documentary, *Living in the Material World*.

Then, in the early 1970s, the Harrison-Starr friendship faced a stern test. One night, in front of his wife, Pattie Boyd, and Ringo, George confessed his love for Starr's then-wife, Maureen. Starr reacted by saying, "Better you than someone we don't know." Not long afterward, Pattie caught George and Maureen in bed together. The marriage between Ringo and Maureen had been on the rocks for some time, and even though they were no longer a group, John Lennon called the affair "virtual incest." (Harrison and Boyd divorced in 1977.) Nevertheless, Harrison and Starr remained close friends for the rest of George's life.

In Scorsese's documentary, Starr recalled one of his final moments with Harrison before his November 2001 death. As Starr was getting ready to leave, he told Harrison that he was going to Boston to visit his daughter, Lee, who was battling a brain tumor. Bedridden with cancer himself, Harrison asked: "Do you want me to come with you?" Starr wiped tears from his eyes as he relayed the story.

In 2003, Ringo paid tribute to George with his song "Never Without You": *We were young, it was fun / And we couldn't lose / Times were right, overnight / We were headline news / Crazy days and reckless nights / Limousines and bright spotlights / We were brothers through it all*

REUNITED
Harrison, Starr and keyboardist Billy Preston catch up at a party in Los Angeles in 1990 (above).

STARR POWER
Starr and Harrison (right) perform during a 1987 show—attended by Princess Diana and Prince Charles—at London's Wembley Stadium.

CHAPTER 5

THE QUIET LEADER

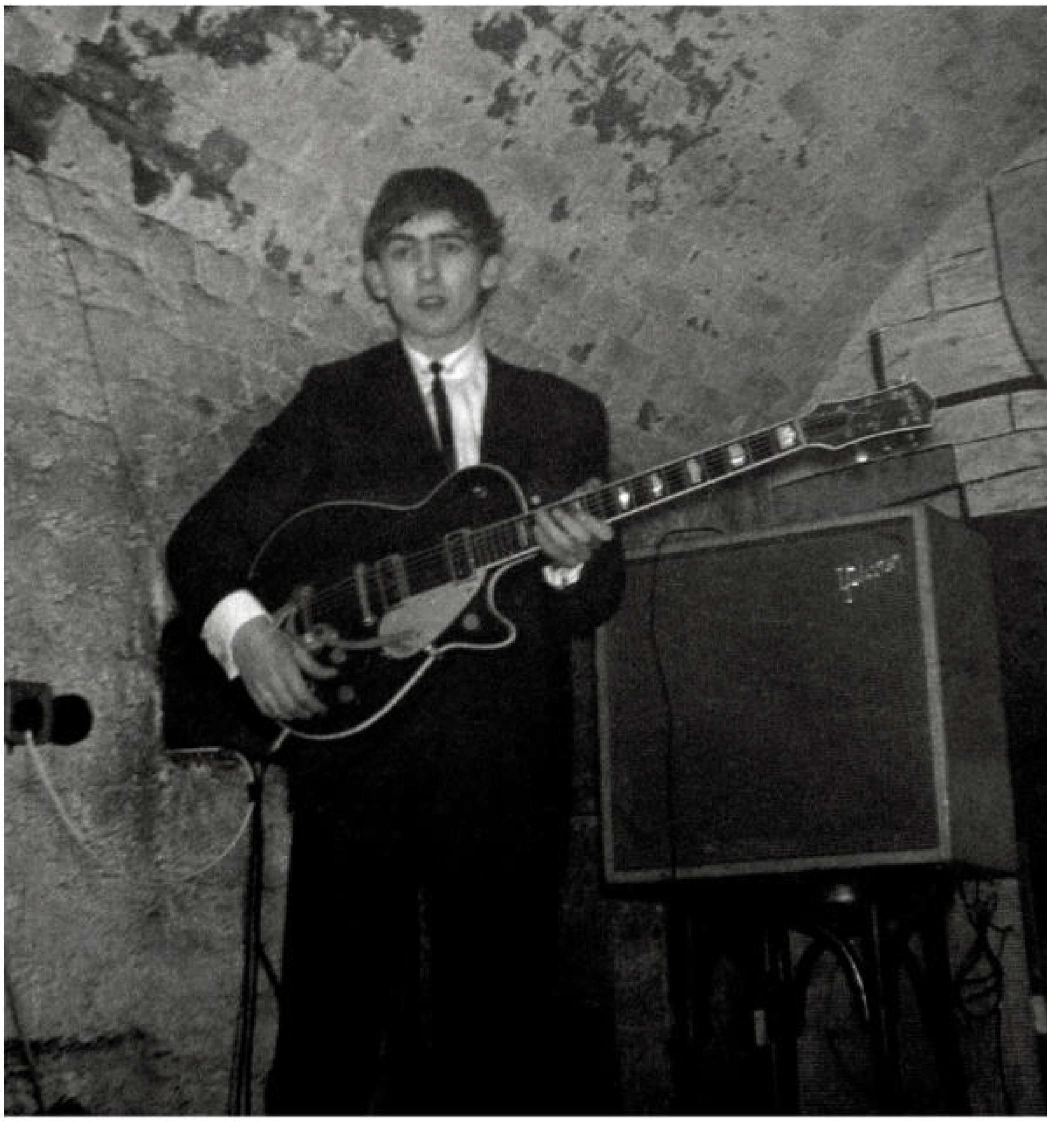
Six ways George profoundly influenced the Beatles

George Harrison helped to push the other members of the Beatles forward by speaking his mind and always telling the truth.

TWA
TWA

CREATIVE MIND
George carries his sitar as the Beatles exit their plane at London's Heathrow Airport in 1968 (left).

EARLY ON
In the early days, Harrison (right, onstage at the Cavern Club) was the Beatles' best guitar player.



IN 1963, THE BEATLES APPEARED

on the BBC Radio program *The Public Ear*. During the interview, the "Quiet Beatle" made a bold proclamation: "Well, you know, I mean, the thing is … individually we're all, I suppose we're all crummy musicians, really." No other Beatle would say something like that and mean it. Despite the lingering belief that Harrison disliked being a Beatle, he was proud of the band and what they had accomplished. He also pushed the others in his own, unique way—by constantly speaking his mind and telling the truth. Here are a half-dozen facets of George's Beatles career that made him an indelible member of the world's most legendary band:

1 **IN THE EARLY DAYS,** he was the Beatles' best guitar player. Paul gets most of the credit for being the most musically talented, but there's a reason he pushed for George to join the band—he respected the youngest Beatle's ability to play lead guitar and take solos. Said bluntly: The sound of the early Beatles—from a musical perspective—was built around George's guitar work.

2 **HARRISON BROUGHT FOLK** and world influences to the band's sound. Around 1965, David Crosby of the Byrds introduced Harrison to the sitar, and the Beatles guitarist incorporated the Indian instrument on that year's "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)"—believed to be its first use in a pop song. By then, Harrison's interest in the Byrds and Bob Dylan helped the Beatles craft their own version of folk rock, which was a key step in their evolution.

3 **GEORGE NEVER SHIED AWAY** from uncomfortable situations. John grabbed the most headlines as the "political" Beatle, but George constantly fought against injustices wherever he saw them—from the Vietnam conflict (he once wrote a scathing telegram to Richard Nixon calling him a "war monger") to his copyright percentages on Beatles songs that he wrote (which were lower than John and Paul's).

HAPPY LADS
The Beatles (below) goof off during the press launch for *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*—their eighth studio album—in London in 1967.

PLAYING SONGS
Paul McCartney, John Lennon and Harrison (right) play their instruments during filming for the movie *Help!* in 1965.

4 GEORGE MADE THE LADS LAUGH. When a band doesn't like hanging around together, everything suffers. And—despite their famous bickering—the Beatles greatly enjoyed one another's company. Humor was a big part of the dynamic, used to lighten anxiety and cut through tension. At the Beatles' first recording session in London, producer George Martin asked if there was anything the group didn't like. "Well, first of all, I don't like your tie," Harrison deadpanned. Martin realized they shared the same dry sense of humor and knew they all could work well together.

5 HE DIDN'T COWER to Lennon and McCartney—right up until the end. The two big Beatles were geniuses, but that didn't mean they were always right. And, when they couldn't keep each other in check, there was always Harrison to keep it real. "I don't want the Beatles to be recording rubbish for my sake just because I wrote it," he once said, "and on the other hand, I don't want to record rubbish just because they wrote it.... The group comes first."

6 HARRISON'S SINGING RANGE helped the Beatles form a distinctive three-part harmony—an edge over other groups. As an "envious" Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones summarized, the Beatles were a vocal group—capable of a sound that others, including the Stones, could not match. "It's basically just trying to avoid hitting the same notes the others are on," Harrison told *Billboard* in 1996. "But when it was all put together, it sounded really good."

> “BUT WHEN IT WAS ALL PUT TOGETHER, IT SOUNDED REALLY GOOD.”

George Harrison

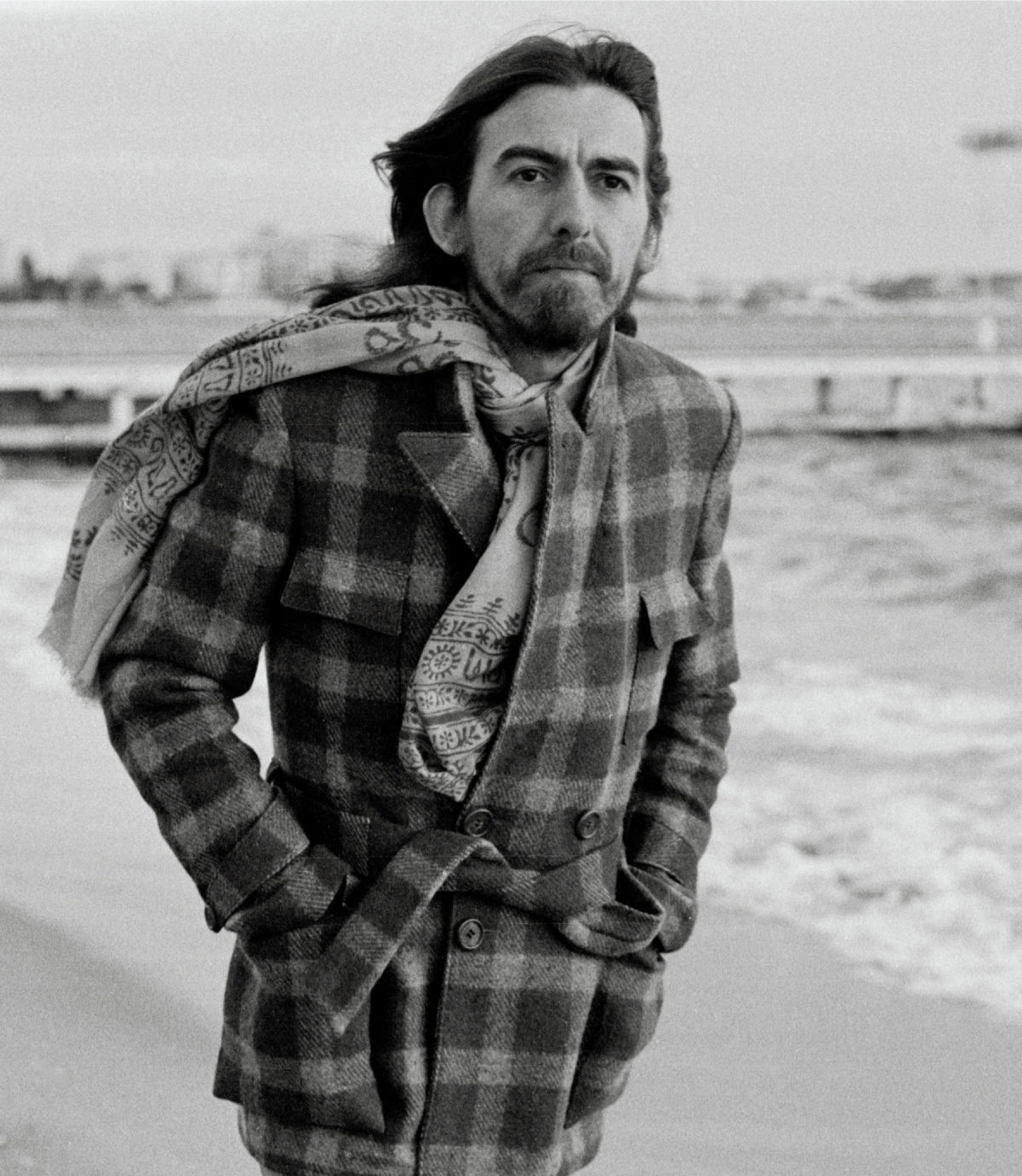
CHAPTER 6

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

George's perspective on his life as a Beatle

For George Harrison, the two biggest breaks in his career as a musician were joining, and then leaving, the Beatles.

CHAPTER 6



QUIET BEATLE
Harrison loved his time as a Beatle, but he never expected—or wanted—the craze that surrounded them as a band.

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT WHAT THE BEATLES MEANT.

George had his own take: “The thing about the Beatles is that they saved the world from boredom.”

Harrison made this grand pronouncement in 1983, 13 years after the Beatles broke up. With the requisite distance from his whirlwind time with the group, Harrison was better equipped to summarize his point of view. To attain his perspective required world tours, screaming hordes, hours of studio time and strained relationships. Along the way, he said he “overdosed” on the Beatles.

“The biggest break in my career was getting in the Beatles in 1962,” Harrison said. “The second biggest break since then is getting out of them.” Despite calls by fans for a Beatles reunion, Harrison worked

TRYING TIMES
Left: Harrison, with Ringo Starr and Lennon at the Whisky A Go Go in Los Angeles, throws his drink at a photographer insisting on photographing the band.

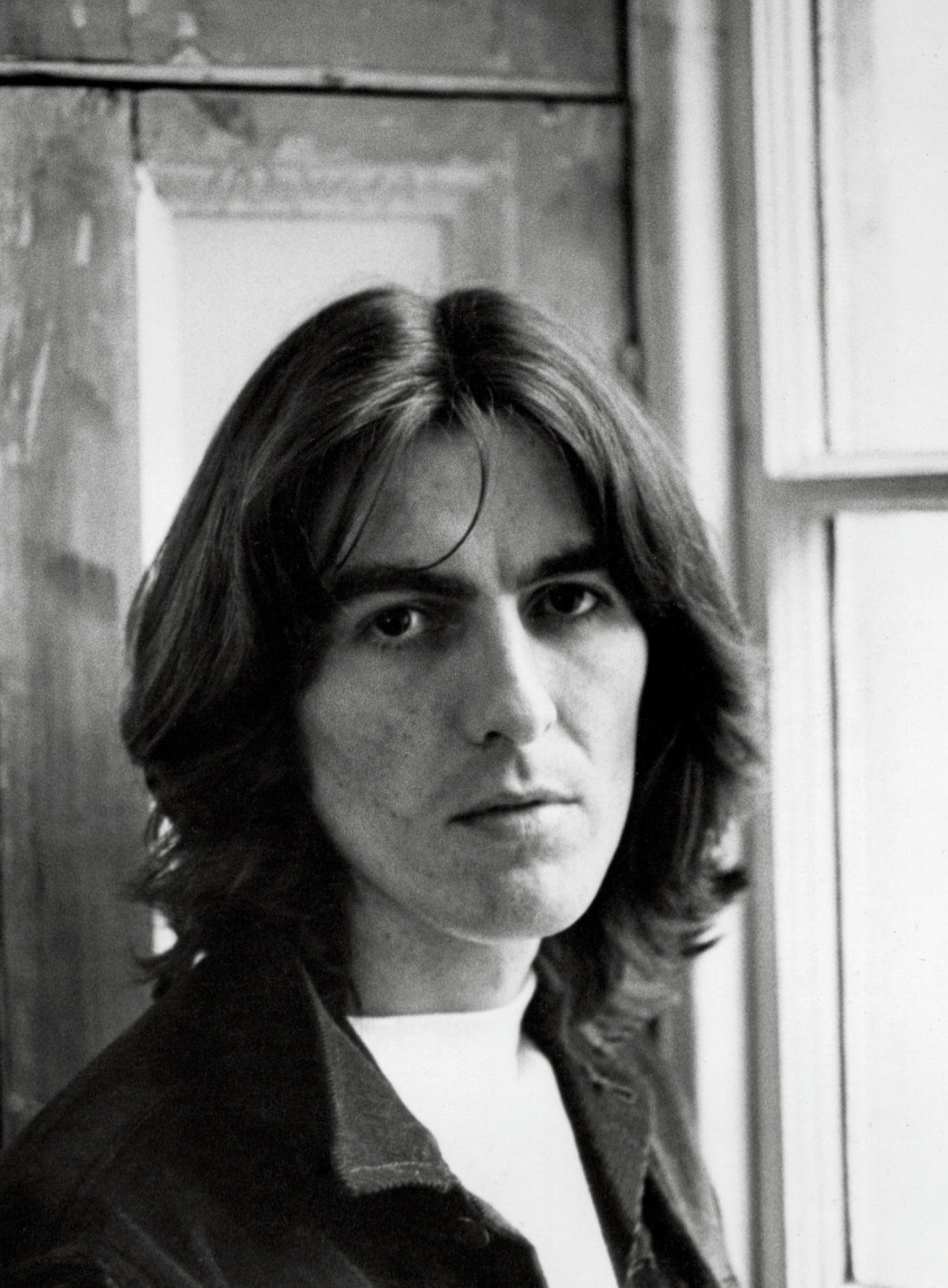
HIGH ROAD
Below: Harrison defended Yoko Ono when he was interviewed by Dick Cavett (right) while appearing on *The Dick Cavett Show* in November 1971.

to maintain a hard-earned distance. He didn't often give interviews after the split, but in March 1979 he told CBS: "You can't go on living in the past." A month later, in a more expansive interview with *Rolling Stone*, Harrison was asked whether he would want to go through the Beatles craze again. "Never," he replied. "Not in this life or any other life."

None of this meant he didn't love being a Beatle. "A lot of the time it was fantastic," he continued in *Rolling Stone*, "but when it really got into the mania it was a question of either stop or end up dead.... We almost got killed in a number of situations—planes catching on fire, people trying to shoot the plane down, and riots everywhere we went. It was aging me." Then he added: "But we had a great time."

Eight years earlier, on Nov. 23, 1971, Harrison also defended Yoko Ono on *The Dick Cavett Show*. The interrogative host asked if Ono caused the Beatles to part ways, which was the prevailing sentiment at the time. "The group had problems long before Yoko came along," Harrison said. "Many problems."

As his distance from the Beatles grew, Harrison's views evolved as well. In a 1987 interview with *Entertainment Tonight*, Harrison said: "I think a lot of people would, you know, if you put out a record and call it the Beatles, you'd have all these people who'd rush out and buy it regardless of if it was a load of rubbish. ... The Beatles did some good things, but they also did some rubbish too." The interviewer noted that Harrison talked about the band like they were someone else. "They are," he replied.

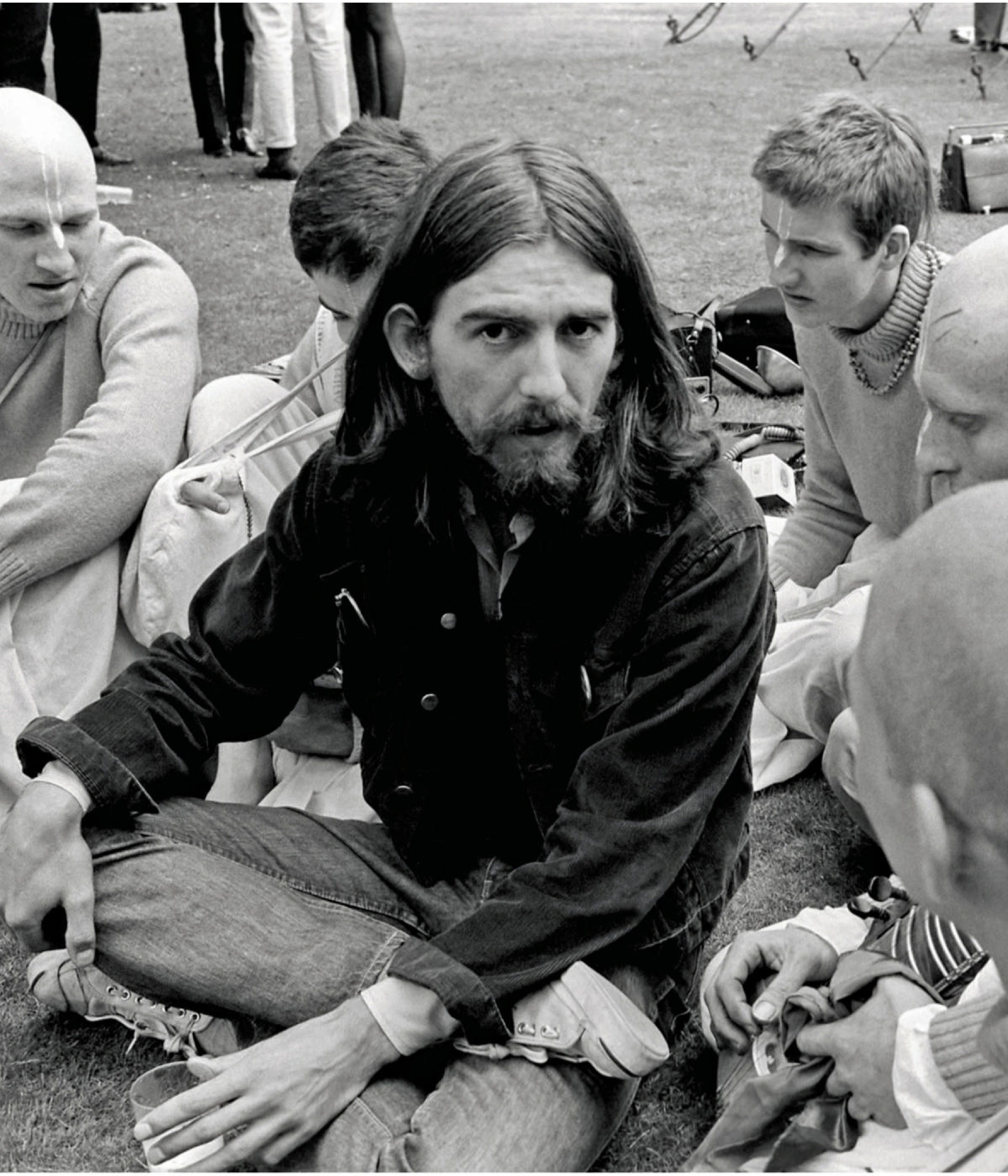


CHAPTER 7

ALL THINGS MUST PASS

George's first post-Beatles solo album showcased his immense talent

After contributing just two songs per album while he was a Beatle, Harrison found himself with a healthy amount of songs to fill his first solo record after the band officially called it quits.



PERSONAL JOURNEY
Harrison's 1970 album, *All Things Must Pass*, was his musical statement about who he was and how much he'd grown.

LIKE THE REST OF THE BEATLES,

George Harrison never formally learned to read or write music with traditional notation. He kept tunes in his head and jotted down lyrics. While with the Fab Four, Harrison worked under the strictures of an unofficial quota of two songs per album. Undeterred, he wrote more than that—to sharpen his skills and build his confidence. George knew he wasn't going to catch up to Paul and John, who had the benefit of writing their "bad" songs before the Beatles were famous. But he never stopped writing.

And, when the Beatles disbanded, he had quite a backlog—enough to make his first solo album a triple-disc release. He entered London's EMI Studios in May 1970 and six months later, the aptly titled *All Things Must Pass* was fully formed.

Featuring contributions by Eric Clapton, Billy Preston and Ringo Starr, Harrison's first solo venture featured 23 songs. After years of being overshadowed, Harrison released *All Things Must Pass* as a musical statement about who he was.

Co-produced with Phil Spector—though Harrison later estimated he did 80% of the work—the album reached No. 1 on the U.S. chart by early January. It also spent eight weeks on the U.K. chart from Feb. 6 to March 27, but because of a postal strike during the period, this wasn't discovered until 2006. (In 2021, the 50th anniversary deluxe edition of *All Things Must Pass* also reached the Billboard 200 top 10.)

Rolling Stone called the album "both an intensely personal statement and a grandiose gesture, a triumph over artistic modesty, even frustration ... whose sheer magnitude and ambition may dub it the *War and Peace* of rock 'n' roll." *The New York Times* similarly declared, "If anyone had any doubts that George Harrison was a major talent, they can relax."

Harrison's exasperation with the Beatles inspired several of the album's noteworthy cuts. He wrote "Wah-Wah" on Jan. 10, 1969, after the infamous row that caused Harrison to temporarily leave the band. Five days later, McCartney and Lennon agreed

SOLO SMASH
Apple Records' Pete Bennett (left) listens to the masters of *All Things Must Pass* along with producer Phil Spector and Harrison prior to its release. The album reached No. 1 in U.S. in January 1971.

> "I WANT TO BE GOD CONSCIOUS. THAT'S MY ONLY AMBITION."

to give Harrison more songwriting input, and he rejoined. But a month later, Harrison also recorded the demo for two other songs on the album, the title track "All Things Must Pass" and "Old Brown Shoe." Neither had been given much consideration as a Beatles release.

By late January 1971, the album's hit single "My Sweet Lord" was selling thousands of copies a day. With Harrison repeating the Hindu mantra, "Hare Krishna ... Krishna, Krishna," the song topped the charts in both the U.S. and the U.K. It also forced Harrison to face an accusation that it sounded too similar to the Chiffons' 1963 hit "He's So Fine." After years of litigation, on Aug. 31, 1976, a court found Harrison guilty of what the judge called "subconsciously accomplished" plagiarism. For a time, the ruling stifled Harrison's creative instincts. "It's difficult to just start writing again after you've been through that," he said.

Nonetheless, *All Things Must Pass* succeeded in showing what Harrison was capable of. His talent validated, he never really felt the need to keep topping his own accomplishments. In 1971, while the album was still in heavy rotation, Harrison was asked about his future. "I want to be God conscious," he said. "That's really my only ambition, and everything else is incidental."

CHAPTER 8

LIFELONG FRIENDS

George built lasting musical relationships beyond the Fab Four

George Harrison (performing in 1974 with keyboardist Billy Preston) formed many important relationships—which often led to meaningful musical collaborations—throughout his life.

HELLO, OLD FRIEND
Harrison and Eric Clapton collaborated many times since first meeting in late 1964. They remained friends throughout Harrison's life.

GEORGE HARRISON BELIEVED FRIENDS

are all souls that we've known in past lives. "We're drawn to each other. That's how I feel about friends. Even if I have only known them a day, it doesn't matter," Harrison once said. "I'm not going to wait till I have known them for two years, because anyway, we must have met somewhere before, you know." The following are six non-Beatles with whom Harrison developed deep bonds.

1 **ERIC CLAPTON:** Friends since the Yardbirds opened for the Beatles in December 1964, Harrison and Clapton collaborated numerous times over their careers. Harrison wrote "Here Comes the Sun" at Clapton's estate, and George said looking at Eric was like "looking at myself." They were so close, Clapton had an affair with George's first wife, Pattie Boyd, and it didn't ruin their friendship. After Clapton and Boyd married in 1979, Harrison joked about being the "husband-in-law."

2 **BOB DYLAN:** Harrison first met Dylan at New York's Delmonico Hotel on Aug. 28, 1964. In May 1966, when Dylan used an electric guitar at a concert at Royal Albert Hall—a sacrilege to his folk fans—Harrison defended his friend. According to Joshua M. Greene's book *Here Comes the Sun,* Harrison called them "idiots." On May 1, 1970, three weeks after the Beatles officially broke up, Dylan and Harrison recorded a secret jam session. They later became bandmates in the supergroup the Traveling Wilburys from 1988 to 1991.

KINDRED SPIRITS
Harrison and Bob Dylan perform at Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh at Madison Square Garden in August 1971.

3 **BILLY PRESTON:** One of the era's best keyboardists, Preston first met Harrison in 1962 while playing in Little Richard's band during a two-week gig in Hamburg while the Beatles were there playing shows at the Star-Club. In January 1969, after seeing Preston play with Ray Charles in London, Harrison asked Preston to play with the band during an *Abbey Road* recording session. His inclusion brought much-needed peace, and like other Harrison pals, Preston felt a mystical connection with George. "He was so relaxing and comfortable, very unaffected by all the mania, just a sweetheart," Preston said following Harrison's death.

4 **JEFF LYNNE:** Known as one of England's best songwriters and a co-founder of Electric Light Orchestra, Lynne produced Harrison's 1987 album, *Cloud Nine*. The two had met briefly in 1968 but hadn't seen each other since. In need of a guiding hand after a five-year hiatus, Harrison thought of Lynne. But first, George asked him if he wanted to go on vacation to Australia. They became tight on that trip, and a year later, Lynne joined Harrison's troubadour band, the Traveling Wilburys.

5 **ERIC IDLE:** Harrison met the British comedian at the premiere of the 1975 film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Idle had heard George wanted to meet him, and as the credits began to roll, Harrison suggested they smoke a joint in the projection booth. They proceeded to have a nonstop dialogue with a thousand questions about each other's lives, the start of a friendship that lasted more than 25 years. Idle called Harrison "one of the few morally good people that rock 'n' roll has produced."

6 **TOM PETTY:** In 1974, Harrison first met Tom Petty while they were both recording with Leon Russell. They didn't meet again until the mid-1980s when Petty was touring with Bob Dylan. Petty told *Rolling Stone* in 2002 that a surprise English "hurricane" made him think he had been friends with Harrison in a past life. Another member of the Traveling Wilburys, Petty later told NPR that Harrison gave him the gift of spirituality—"a way of understanding a higher power without it being stupid or having tons of rules and books to read."

CHAPTER 9

GEORGE IN TELEVISION AND FILM

After the Beatles, Harrison took an active interest in screens big and small

Once the Beatles officially ended, George Harrison had time to explore other artistic endeavors, including forming his film production company, HandMade Films.

VOX
VOX
Earwig
THE
UTLES

MOCKUMENTARY
Harrison and friend Eric Idle, of the comedy group Monty Python, released a Beatles-inspired comedy film in 1978 called *The Rutles: All You Need Is Cash.*

ON OCT. 5, 1969, JUST BEFORE 11 P.M.,

the comedy series *Monty Python's Flying Circus* debuted on the BBC. George Harrison watched the premiere episode with Beatles press officer Derek Taylor, and afterward, Harrison "couldn't understand how normal television could continue after that." Within seven months, the Beatles disbanded, and by the end of the 1970s, Harrison's love of Monty Python served as an impetus for forming a film production company—HandMade Films—with his music manager Denis O'Brien. In keeping with his artistic temperament, George's company often rescued movies that others had declined. Here are six prominent projects Harrison lent his money—and, in some cases, acting talent—toward bringing to life:

1 ***THE RUTLES: ALL YOU NEED IS CASH* (1978):** This Beatlemania mockumentary follows four blokes named Dirk, Nasty, Stig and Barry as they rise to worldwide fame. Or, as the black-and-white newsreel intro states, the story of the Rutles is "a living legend, a legend that will live long after lots of other living legends have died." Written and co-directed by pal Eric Idle, George makes a cameo as boring 1950s singer Jimmy Glimmer—"The Wallasey Warbler"—who interviews the band's press agent, Eric Manchester, outside Rutle Corps as it's being looted.

AWARD-WINNING Actor Bob Hoskins (below, left) and Harrison celebrate his win for best actor at the 1987 BAFTA Awards. For his role in *Mona Lisa*, Hoskins also won a Golden Globe and was nominated for an Oscar.

ARTISTIC ENDEAVORS Harrison and pop star Madonna attend a press conference for *Shanghai Surprise* in London. Starring newlyweds Sean Penn and Madonna, the 1986 film was considered a flop.

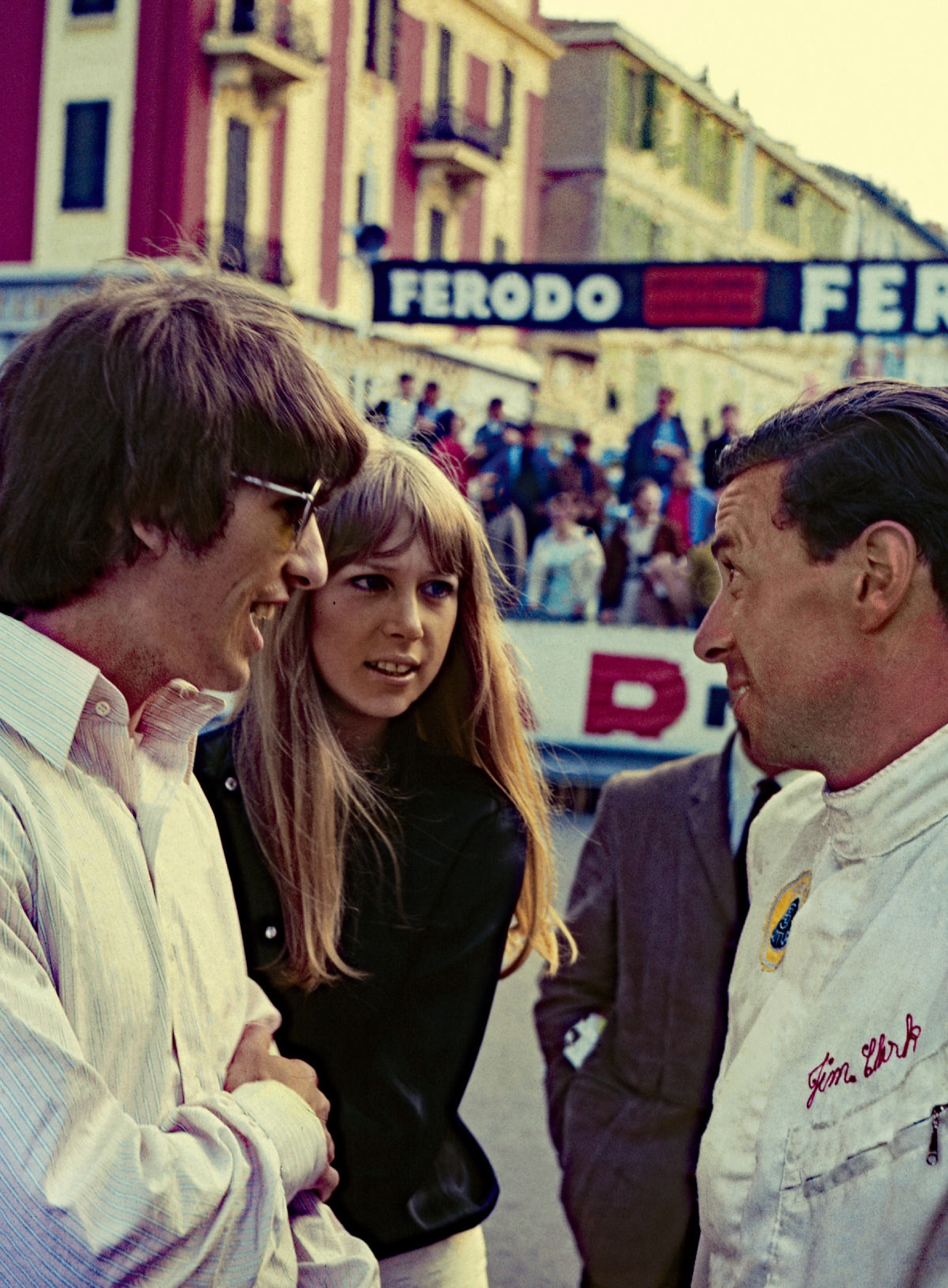
2 ***LIFE OF BRIAN* (1980):** After EMI pulled funding over concerns about the film's morality, Harrison put up his estate in Henley-on-Thames as collateral so friend Idle, and the rest of the Monty Python players, could shoot their comedy classic. Harrison also makes a 15-second cameo in this story about the three wise men mistaking an average man a few stalls down from Baby Jesus as the Messiah. This was the first movie produced by Harrison's HandMade Films.

3 ***TIME BANDITS* (1981):** No major studio would fund this dark fantasy-comedy, directed by Monty Python troupe member Terry Gilliam, featuring a group of thieves who steal a map from God and pilfer their way through history. Harrison and partner O'Brien stepped forward once again, mortgaging their Cardogan Square office to raise the film's requisite $5 million. Harrison also contributed the film's closing credits song, "Dream Away."

4 ***MONA LISA* (1986):** Under director Neil Jordan's guidance, Bob Hoskins received a best actor Oscar nod for his role as a low-level gangster who falls in love with a high-class call girl. It was the first Academy Award nomination for HandMade Films. Hoskins also won a Golden Globe, a BAFTA and best actor at the Cannes Film Festival. Harrison called Hoskins' performance "brilliant."

5 ***SHANGHAI SURPRISE* (1986):** The match between Madonna—"The Material Girl"—and the man behind the song "Living in the Material World," was not so perfect. The romantic comedy starred then-newlyweds Madonna and Sean Penn as a missionary nurse and necktie salesman who team up to ease her patients' pain. It was a flop. But Harrison did contribute some positive energy. During production, Harrison was summoned to the set to create peace after Penn had punched a photographer and smashed a window.

6 ***THE SIMPSONS* (1993):** Part of the pantheon of famous musicians to appear on this long-running animated series, Harrison's doppelganger appears in two episodes: "Last Exit to Springfield" (aired during season 4 on March 11, 1993) and "Homer's Barbershop Quartet" (season 5 premiere on Sept. 30, 1993). In his first guest spot (though not actually voiced by Harrison), he appears in Lisa's *Yellow Submarine*-inspired nitrous oxide hallucination. In the second, Homer's band the Be Sharps are invited to the Grammys, but he shows more interest in a plate of brownies than George Harrison.


FERODO
FER
D
Jim Clark

CHAPTER 10

A MAN OF MANY PASSIONS

When George liked something, he went all in

George Harrison's hobbies outside of the Beatles included his passion for Formula 1 racing and gardening.

GREEN THUMB
Harrison attends the Chelsea Flower Show in London in 1984. His Victorian home in Henley-on-Thames featured 35 acres of gardens that Harrison tended to himself.

IN MANY WAYS, GEORGE CONSIDERED

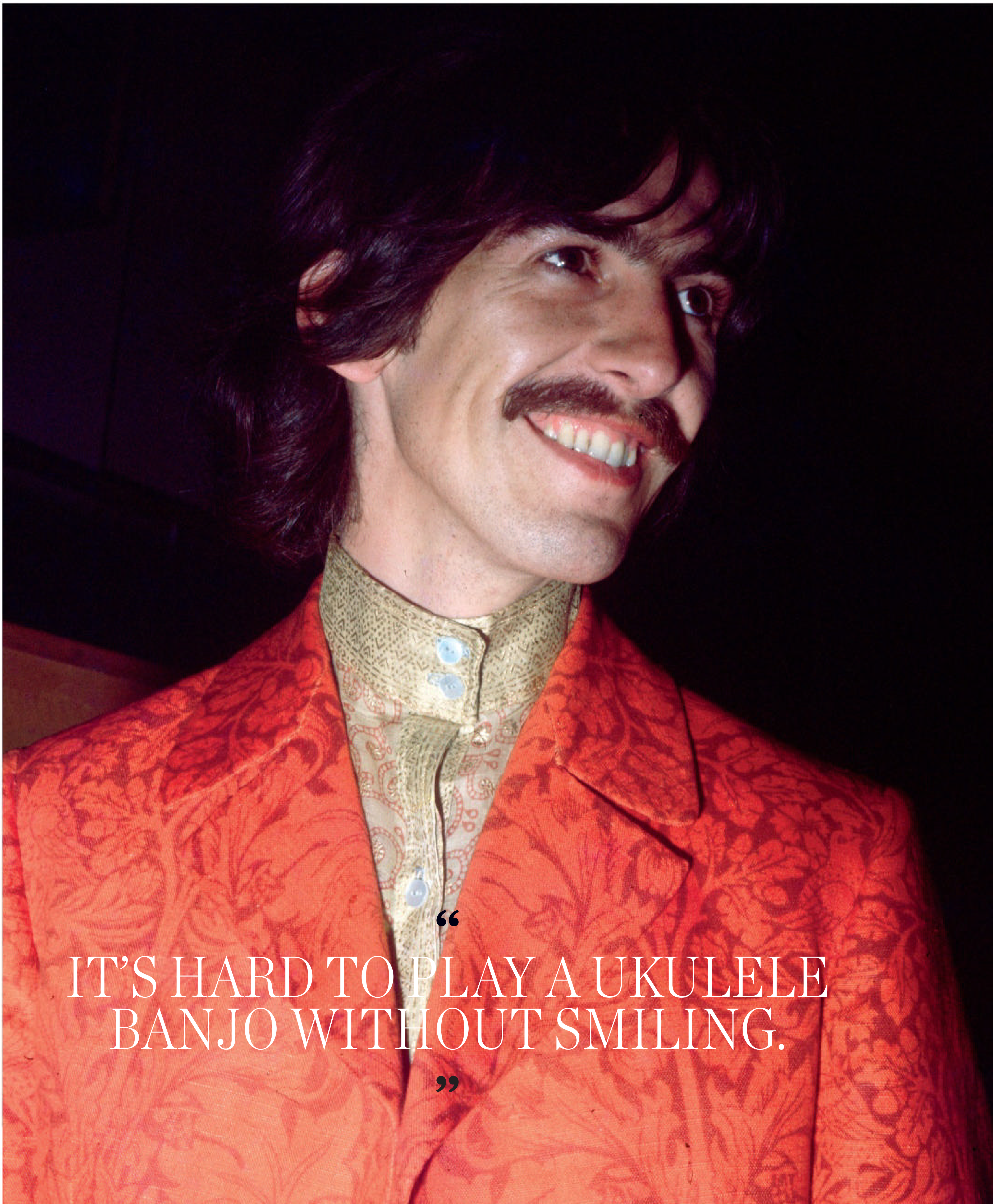
being a member of the most famous rock band in history as the least interesting aspect of his life. As his wife, Olivia, explained in the Martin Scorsese documentary *George Harrison: Living in the Material World*, her husband had a "curious mind, and when he got into something, he wanted to know everything." Here are a few examples of how far-reaching his passions were.

GARDENING: When Harrison bought Friar Park, a run-down Victorian neo-Gothic mansion in Henley-on-Thames in 1970, it came with 35 acres of gardens. Harrison decided to become a gardener so as not to let them deteriorate. For George, gardening had a very calming upside: "The flowers don't answer you back, don't give you no trouble," he said in a 1981 *Good Morning America* interview. In 2022, Olivia Harrison told the *Sunday Times* that her husband "wanted most of all to be remembered as a gardener. One who 'wrote one or two good tunes.'"

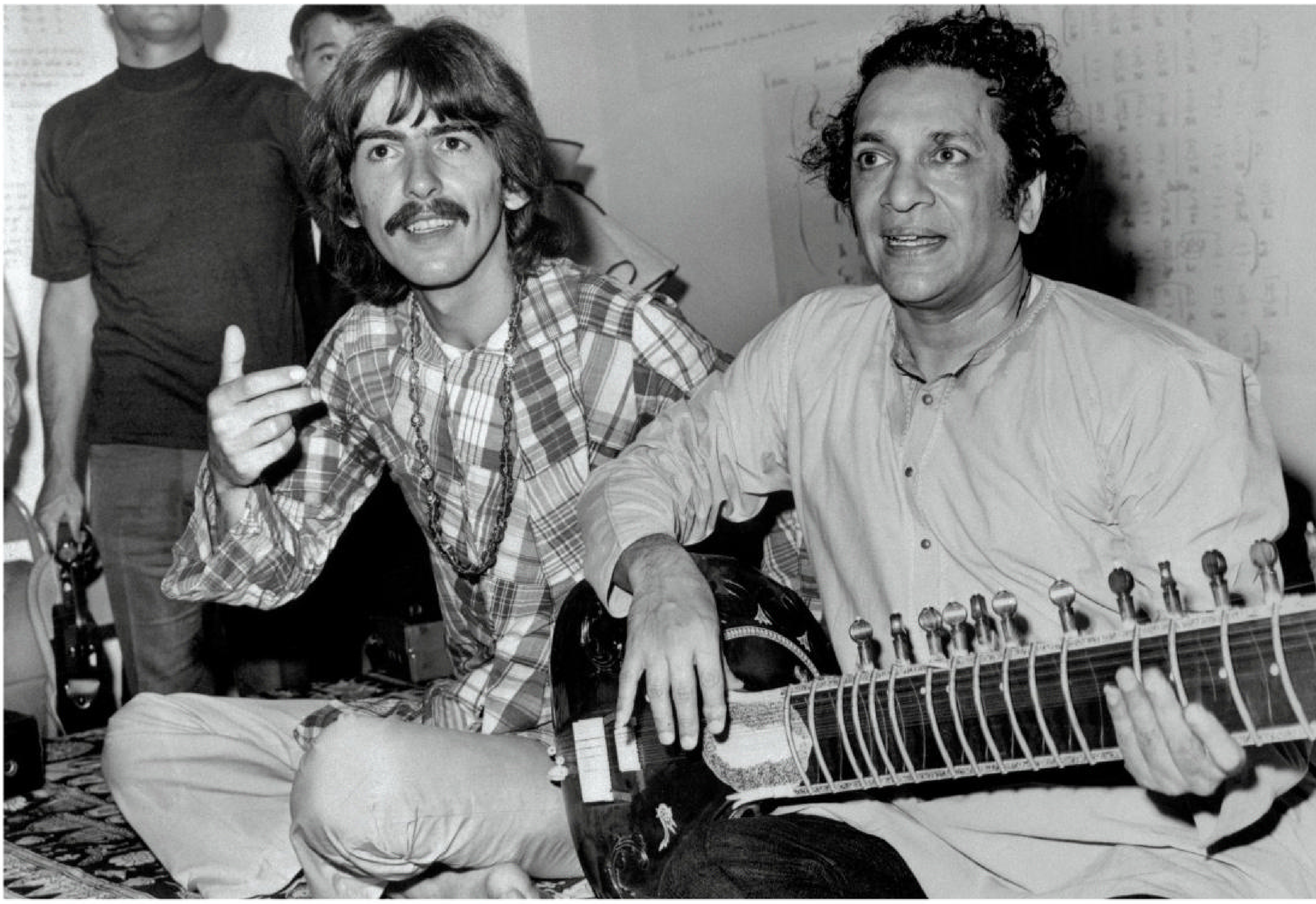
FORMULA 1 RACING: At the age of 12, Harrison went to his first British Grand Prix. He was hooked. In 1966, he struck up a friendship with famed driver Jackie Stewart, and he became a mainstay at various tracks around the world. But just being a fan wasn't enough. Harrison drove an F1 car around Brands Hatch in a charity event for Gunnar Nilsson, a Swedish driver who died of cancer. Harrison, who gave many at-the-track TV interviews, also owned a dark purple McLaren F1 car, which cost nearly $800,000. His self-titled 1979 solo album included "Faster," an ode to his racer friends.

FASHION FORWARD
Known for his distinct style in Swinging London, Harrison (below) was not afraid of bright patterns and clothing with ruffled accents.

MUSIC FAN
Harrison's (right) musical interests included an admiration for Indian music and learning to play such instruments as the sitar.



> "IT'S HARD TO PLAY A UKULELE BANJO WITHOUT SMILING."



COLLECTING UKULELES: Harrison often traveled with a trunk full of them. He played one on the song "Free as a Bird," as well as in his solo work and with his band the Traveling Wilburys. Harrison also belonged to the George Formby Society, a group honoring Britain's most famous ukulele player. "It's hard to play a ukulele banjo without smiling," Harrison told the BBC. "It tends to lighten your life a bit." Up until the end, while battling cancer, George played the ukulele to keep his spirits up.

INDIAN MUSIC: In October 1965, a few days after strumming a sitar at a restaurant during filming on the Beatles' second film, *Help!*, Harrison bought one at an import shop on London's Oxford Street. Shortly thereafter, Harrison's musician friends recommended he listen to Indian sitarist Ravi Shankar. He did, and a year later, he met Shankar at the house of a mutual friend, who had founded the city's Asian Music Circle. Shankar began giving Harrison sitar lessons. George later traveled to India and incorporated Indian music into his work whenever he could.

CLOTHES: As far as style goes, Harrison was something of a fashion plate in Swinging London and beyond. After his first marriage to English model Pattie Boyd, he started dabbling with wearing fur and bright patterns. Harrison was also known to wear a wide range of sleek pinstripe suits, ruffled shirts, English outerwear and French denim accents. In the early '60s, he had one special accessory: a silver belt buckle.

THE BEATLES: As strange as it may seem, Harrison thought of the band as something he did in his spare time. In a telling 1967 interview with *Melody Maker*, Harrison expressed his boredom with his Fab Four fame. "The Beatles is just a hobby really," he said. "It's just doing it on its own. We don't even have to think about it. The songs write themselves. It just all works out." He further explained that, at least for him, "the output coming out the back end is still so much smaller than what you're putting in." Thus, Harrison's restless curiosity led him to explore, and expand, his pursuits.

CHAPTER 11

LOVES OF HIS LIFE

George eventually found his own version of domestic bliss

Pattie Boyd, Harrison's first wife, moved on from their 1977 divorce by eventually marrying Harrison's best friend, Eric Clapton.

CHAPTER 11

CHANCE MEETING
Harrison and first wife, Pattie Boyd (left, during their honeymoon in Barbados), met in 1964 on the set of *A Hard Day's Night.*

FIRST LOVE
Boyd (below, in 1964), a model and photographer, married Harrison on Jan. 21, 1966.

"WILL YOU MARRY ME?"

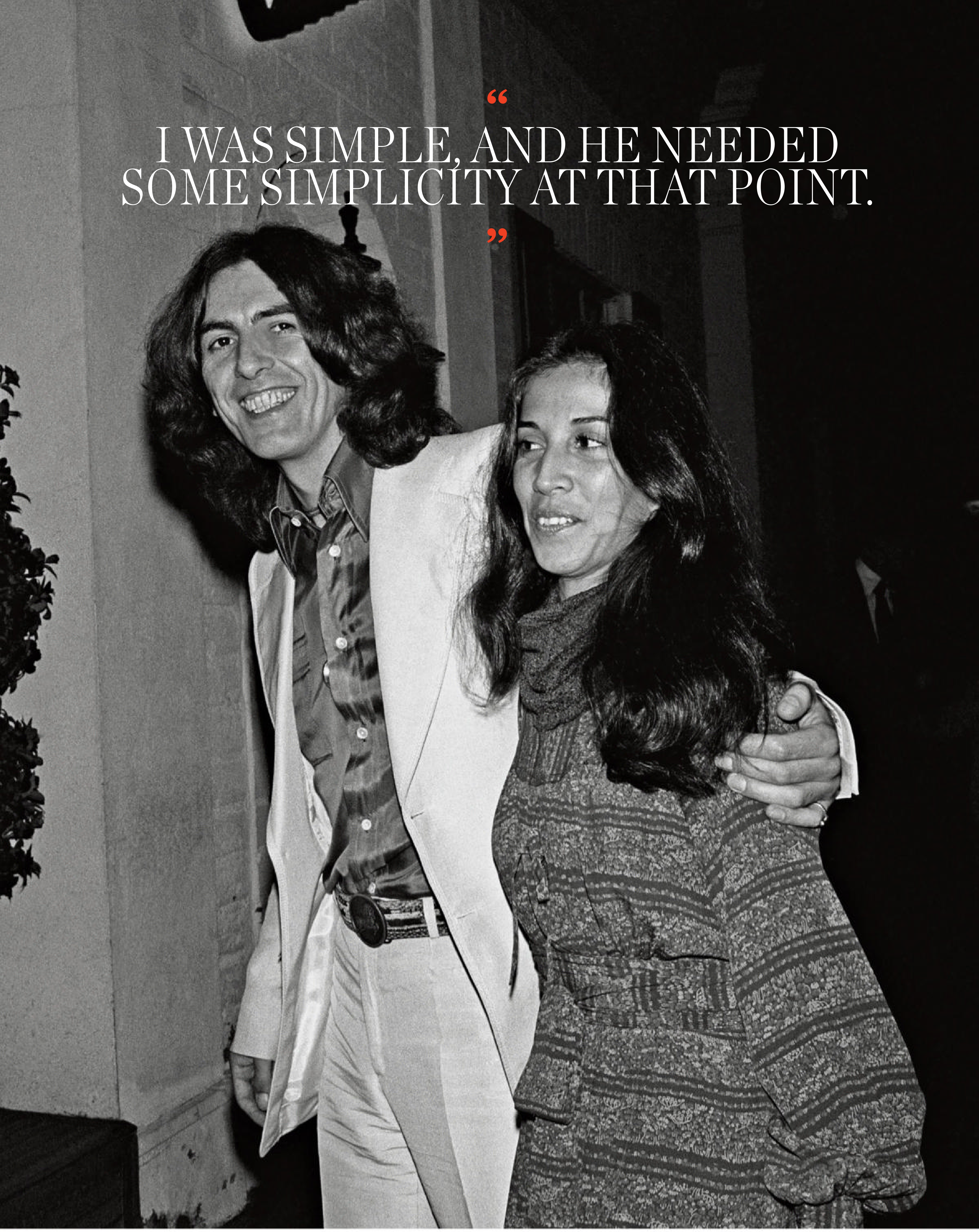
George Harrison posed that question to model Pattie Boyd the day they met after filming her brief train scene in the Beatles' film *A Hard Day's Night*. Thinking he was joking, she laughed. So Harrison asked her out to dinner that night. Boyd couldn't go; she had a boyfriend. That day, March 2, 1964, Boyd hadn't expected to meet the Beatles at all when she was hired for a secret film project. Boyd took the gig on a whim not thinking she could act, and along with two other girls, hopped on a train bound from London to Cornwall.

Ten minutes in, the train stopped at a tiny station and four lads jumped on. They had been the only four people on the platform. The Beatles entered the carriage and introduced themselves, even though the girls instantly recognized them. But only one of the Fab Four caught Boyd's eye. "At a break for lunch, I found myself sitting next to him," Boyd recalled years later. "Being close to him was electrifying."

About a week later, Boyd was called back for a film promotional shoot. Boyd had ended things with her boyfriend and let Harrison know that she was free. "Good, let's go out tonight," he said. Beatles manager Brian Epstein served as a chaperone, and George, then 21, and Pattie, just shy of 20, became an item. On Jan. 21, 1966, they married.

The meet-cute did not have a fairy-tale ending. The young Beatle was surrounded by temptations at every turn, and he indulged numerous infidelities. Boyd also had a fiery affair with Harrison's best friend, Eric Clapton, whom she eventually married. Harrison and Boyd split in 1974, and the couple officially divorced in 1977.

Years earlier, Harrison had already spoken with the woman who became his second—and last—wife, Olivia Arias. He just didn't know it. An Angeleno from a Mexican American family, Olivia worked at A&M Records in Los Angeles, and in 1972, began regularly corresponding with George



“I WAS SIMPLE, AND HE NEEDED SOME SIMPLICITY AT THAT POINT.”

LASTING LOVE
Left: Harrison and second wife, Olivia, were married in 1978 after having their son, Dhani.

HIS FATHER'S SON
Harrison's only child, musician and composer Dhani Harrison (below), was raised out of the spotlight.

over the phone as the label was distributing his new Dark Horse label. They talked so frequently that they discovered their shared interests in meditation and spirituality and similar modest upbringings. In 1974, Olivia met Harrison in-person for the first time, when she arranged a welcoming party of one for the launch of Dark Horse. Shortly thereafter, he hired her away for his new label. Harrison and Arias became romantically involved, and in 1978, they had a son, Dhani, Harrison's only child and the other great love of his life. George and Olivia wed that same year.

Family life brought welcome relief from a tumultuous and often painful period for Harrison—one that included the breakup of the Beatles, his divorce and too much time in court related to both. "I was from outside of his world. I was shelter from the storm," Olivia Harrison told the *Los Angeles Times* in 2005. "I was simple, and he needed some simplicity at that point." The lyrics of "Dark Sweet Lady," a song on Harrison's self-titled 1979 album, summed up his love for Olivia: "You came and helped me through / When I'd let go / You came from out the blue / Never have known what I'd done without you."

Harrison had the same heartfelt appreciation for his son. George and Olivia raised Dhani out of the spotlight, but his father treated him like an adult from a young age. Olivia was "constantly surprised" by things Dhani said that he'd learned from his dad—including being in the here and now. According to Dhani, George has even guided his son from the afterlife—he once asked his father in a dream: "Where have you been?" Harrison answered: "Here the whole time."

CHAPTER 12

GEORGE'S MUSIC

The stories behind six of George's most iconic songs

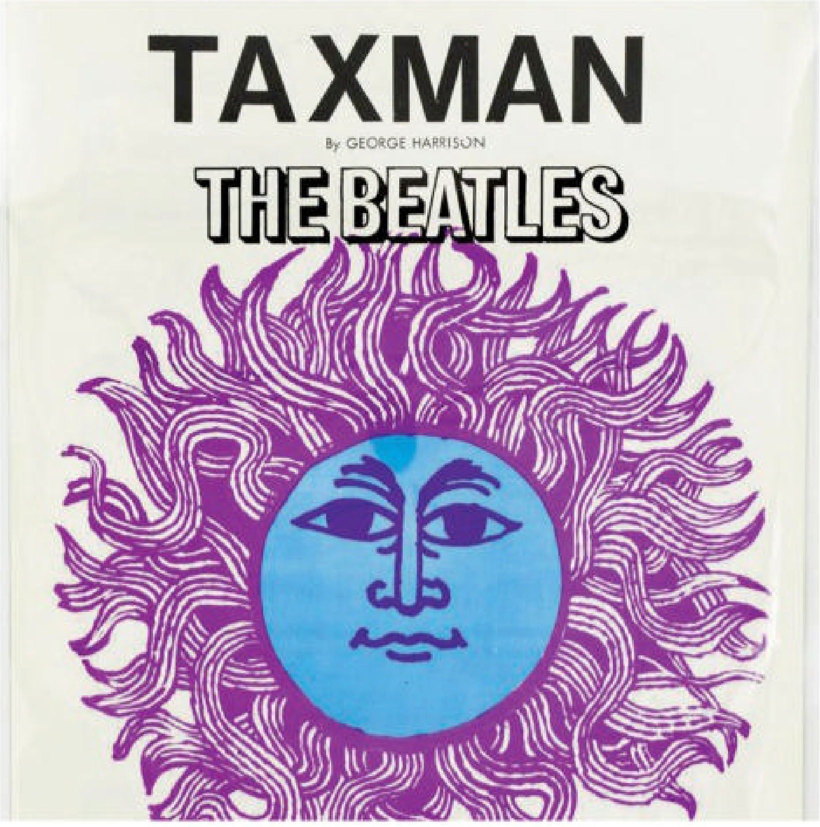
During his time as a Beatle, George Harrison's talent as a musician and his skill as a songwriter really blossomed.

Gretsch

SUPERGROUP
Left: Harrison and Eric Clapton serve as backing musicians for rockabilly legend Carl Perkins (center) in 1985.

WHEN THE BEATLES BEGAN,

George stood far behind Paul and John when it came to writing songs. But eventually, he bridged the gap so completely that finding room for his songs on Beatles albums became its own challenge. “I think it was easy to underestimate George because me and John had always written most of the stuff and had had most of the singles,” McCartney admitted in an interview on *The Howard Stern Show*. “George was a late bloomer as far as writing was concerned. He wasn’t that interested in the beginning. But then he started to get interested and boy, did he bloom. He wrote some of the greatest songs ever.” Here are six examples of George’s best work.



“Taxman”: Musically inspired by the theme song of the popular 1960s *Batman* TV series, the song was deemed worthy of the lead track on the Beatles’ milestone 1966 album *Revolver*. The lyrics detail the band’s cheeky disagreement with England’s then-exorbitant tax rate on the wealthy—which could climb as high as 95%. British bands such as the Rolling Stones, the Who, and the Beatles toured America and elsewhere in Europe in an effort to keep more of their money. Harrison’s biting humor is evident in the lyrics: “Should five percent appear too small / Be thankful I don’t take it all.” In all, *Revolver* included three songs written by George—the other two were “Love You To” and “I Want to Tell You”—the most “Harrisongs” on an original studio release from the band.

“While My Guitar Gently Weeps”: Harrison decided to write a song based on the first thing he saw when he opened the book *I Ching*. He saw the words “gently weeps,” and this was the classic that resulted. For years, Harrison struggled to get his songs on a Beatles album. So when he presented this song to McCartney and Lennon, he came prepared with a secret ally: Eric Clapton. Harrison invited his good friend to play an uncredited solo on the track. When Clapton showed up at the studio, Paul and John were understandably sold.

SURROUNDED Harrison (seated) chats with Yoko Ono while Ringo Starr smokes a cigarette during the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Jan. 20, 1988.

> "IT HAS THIS POWER WITHIN IT. IT'S JUST HYPNOTIC."

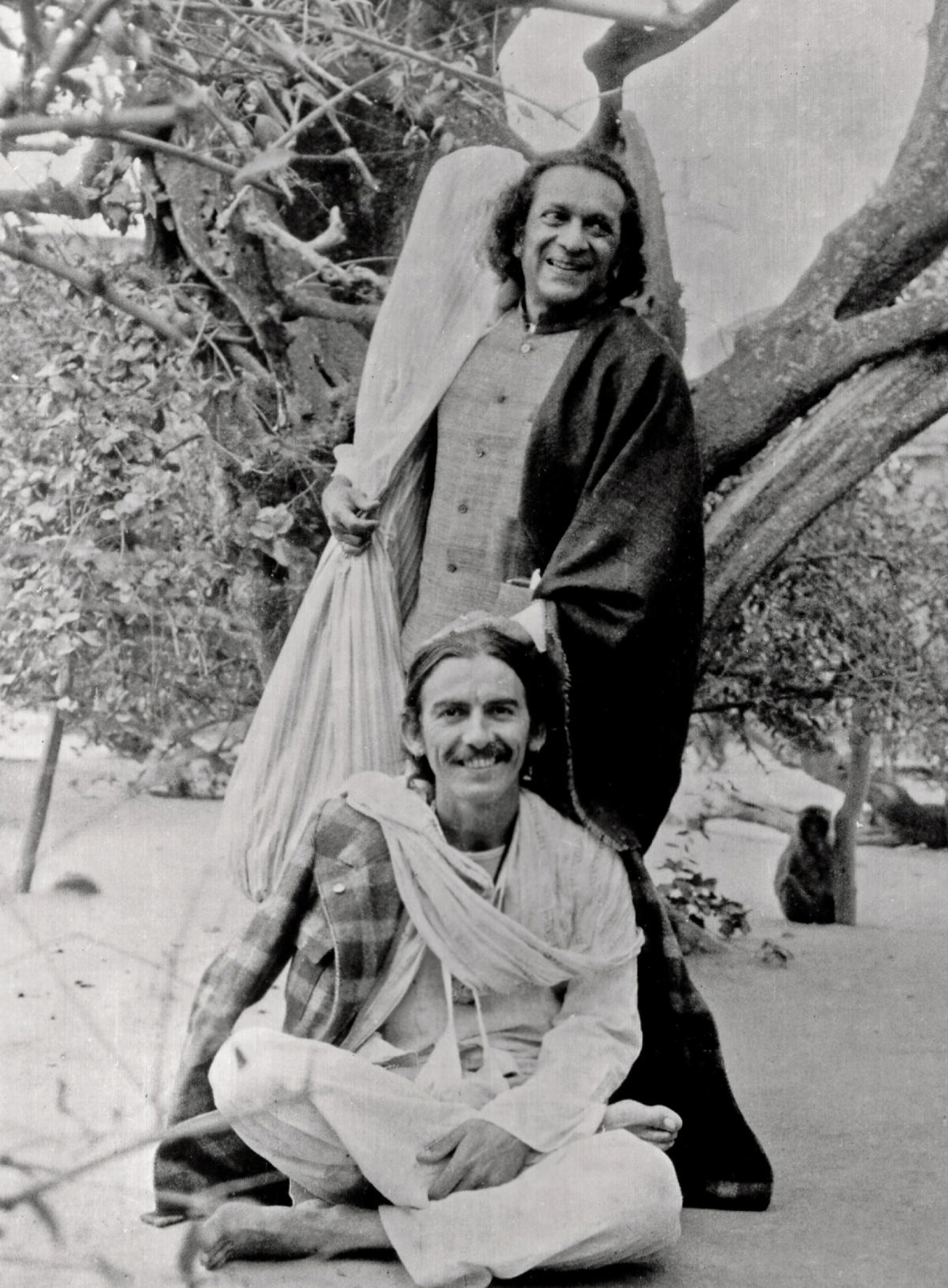
8E 006 04692 M
PARLOPHONE
EMI
george harrison
my sweet lord

"Here Comes the Sun": After another studio row with McCartney and Lennon, Harrison escaped to Clapton's Surrey estate, grabbed one of his friend's acoustic guitars, and wrote this paean to daybreak. The two friends sat in the garden and hashed it out together. "It was a beautiful morning, and he began to sing the opening lines and I just watched this thing come to life," Clapton said. Tellingly, Lennon didn't play on this song, which the Beatles never performed live.

"Something": Considered one of the Beatles greatest hits, it's also arguably their best song written by Harrison. Peaking at No. 4 in the U.K. and No. 3 in the States, Harrison said he wrote the song for his first wife, Pattie Boyd, though he also later said he didn't have anyone in mind when writing it during a break on the *White Album*. The first line of the song was inspired by the James Taylor song "Something in the Way She Moves," which George heard when Taylor auditioned with the Beatles' label, Apple. Taylor didn't object: "I felt hugely flattered," he said.

"My Sweet Lord": George's biggest hit as a solo performer, it ranked No. 1 on both the U.K. and U.S. charts. In a declaration of his spiritual beliefs, he incorporated a mantra, the repetition of Krishna. "Mantras are, well, they call it a mystical sound vibration encased in a syllable," Harrison explained in the documentary *Living in the Material World*. "It has this power within it. It's just hypnotic." Recorded at Abbey Road studios using the Beatles' old equipment, the song featured contributions from Billy Preston and Eric Clapton.

"All Those Years Ago": The song was originally written for Ringo Starr, but the vocal range was too high. After the murder of John Lennon on Dec. 8, 1980, Harrison reworked the lyrics in tribute to him. The nostalgic song was produced by erstwhile Beatles producer George Martin and featured Starr, Paul and Linda McCartney, and Denny Laine from Paul's band Wings. Released in May 1981 as a single from Harrison's album *Somewhere in England*, it rose to No. 13 on the U.K. chart and No. 2 in the U.S.

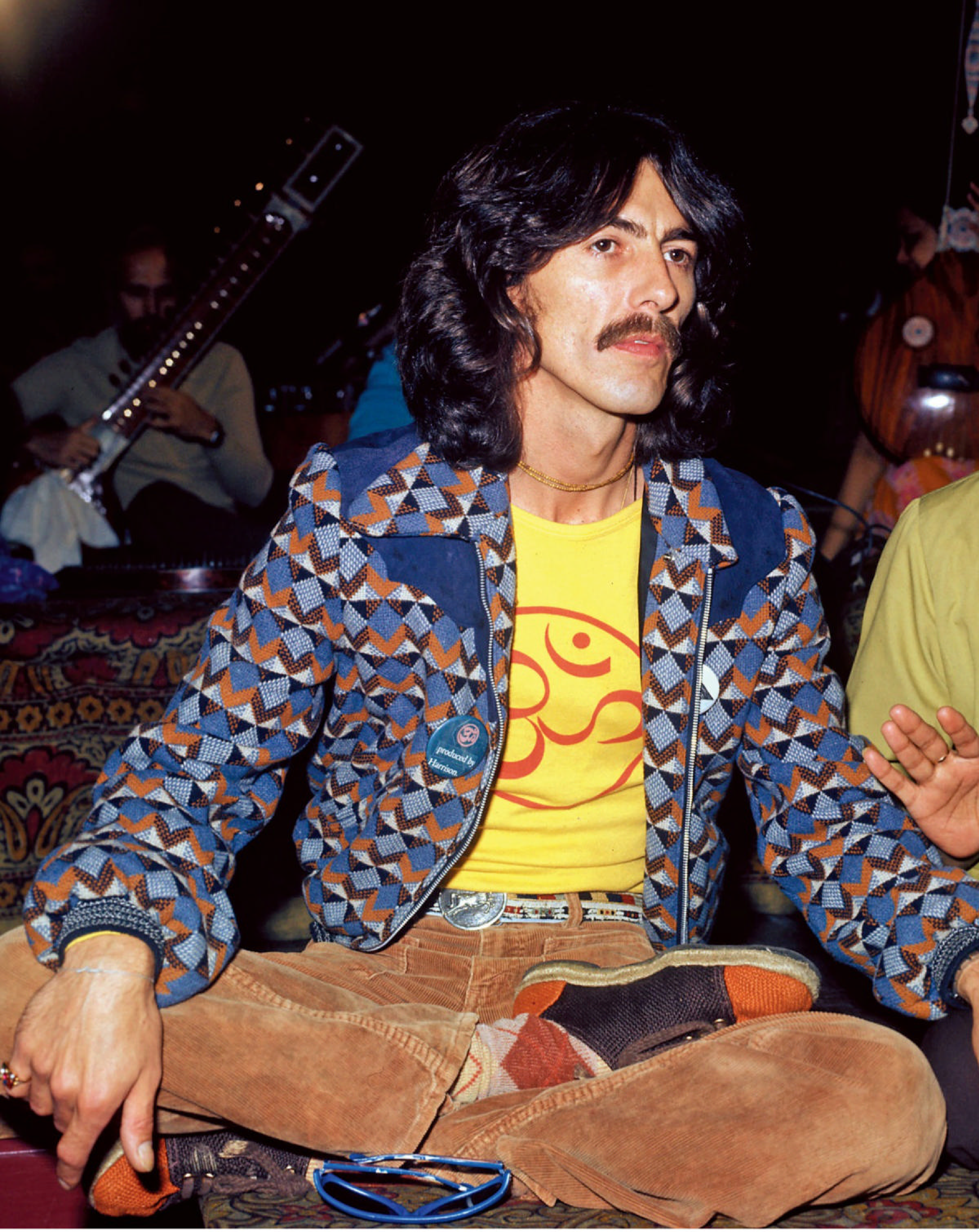


CHAPTER 13

A QUEST FOR MEANING

George sought spiritual health—and defined it—on his own terms

Born into Catholicism, George Harrison took it upon himself to study Eastern religions and discover what spirtuality meant for him.


produced by
Harrison

EASTERN TEACHINGS
Harrison met Ravi Shankar in June 1965. He began to take sitar lessons with the Indian master and his interest in Eastern practices intensified.

THOUGH RAISED IN CATHOLICISM,

his mother's faith, 11-year-old George Harrison harbored a healthy skepticism of organized religion. Instead of attending his Confirmation, Harrison decided to "confirm it later." Harrison, it seems, was always a spiritual seeker. What George eventually confirmed for himself was that God was part of all of us, a conviction he arrived at through his personal connection to Eastern religions and practices such as Hinduism, yogism and transcendental meditation.

Harrison's spiritual journey evolved based on three prime catalysts: his reaction to the fear-inducing chaos of Beatlemania, an unexpected moment of clarity after taking LSD for the first time, and an introduction to Indian philosophy through the music and friendship of sitarist Ravi Shankar.

In 1964, during the Beatles' frenzy-inducing trip to America, the group once had to use a Chicago fire escape to avoid the screaming masses and reach the venue right next door. George's sister, Louise, said her brother looked like "a deer looking into the barrel of a gun." It was one of many frightening experiences on that tour. Beatlemania soured Harrison on fame and pushed him to search for bigger answers to life's mysteries.

One mind-expanding escape was LSD, which Harrison took at a party in the spring of 1965. This was a watershed moment because, as George told *Rolling Stone*, "until LSD I never realized that there was anything beyond this everyday state of consciousness." He added: "I had such an overwhelming feeling of well-being, that there was a God, and I can see him in every blade of grass."

That June, Harrison met Shankar, and began sitar lessons with the Indian master. Harrison's interest in Eastern practices intensified. At Shankar's behest, in September 1966, Harrison and his first wife, Pattie Boyd, traveled to Srinagar, Kashmir, and lived on a houseboat with a view of the Himalayas. Amid the serene environment, George read numerous books, including ones by Hindi monks Swami Vivekenanda (1863-1902) and Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952),

CHAPTER 13

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY Harrison strolls with the Beach Boys' Mike Love and John Lennon in India during a two-month course at the Himalayan Meditational Camp in 1968.

> “THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT THEY ARE GOD.”

who introduced meditation and Kriya yoga to millions of followers. Harrison became a devout Hindu, and he is also often credited for making yoga more popular in the West. (There are images of gurus on the cover of the 1967 Beatles album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.)

In a *London Evening Standard* interview in 1967, Harrison delineated his adult view of Christianity. “Christ was the one washing the leper's feet, so he was very, very humble, but it's not the way they're putting it down now. [People] feel as though God is that up there and they are that down there and they don't realize that they are God.”

Five months after Kashmir, Boyd saw a newspaper ad for Transcendental Meditation and signed up. Soon, George and the other Beatles became interested as well. In August 1967, the Fab Four attended a lecture of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Following the unexpected overdose death of Beatles manager Brian Epstein, the Maharishi invited the Beatles to his ashram in Rishikesh, India, where in winter 1968 the group wrote 48 songs.

Harrison's involvement in the Krishna movement—in both music and action—deepened in the subsequent years, and he met another metaphysical mentor, Swami Srila Prabhupada, at John Lennon's house in September 1969. Prabhupada instructed George that knowledge of God was the birthright of everyone's soul. Ultimately, though, Harrison's personal quest was, in and of itself, the goal. In April 1970, he told the BBC television series *Fact or Fantasy?* that “the only reason to be living is to have complete full knowledge, full bliss consciousness, everything else is just mundane and secondary.”

CHAPTER 14

ALL CREDIT TO GEORGE

Amazing facts about George Harrison that are often overlooked

Thanks to maintaining a largely private life, especially for a Beatle, Harrison managed to keep some of his accomplishments unknown to even his fans.

GEORGE WASN'T ONE TO CROW

publicly about his life or accomplishments, a fact that fueled the erroneous perception that he was the "quiet" one. In reality, he was simply the most private person in the band. In celebration of George, here are some interesting and noteworthy details.

HE WAS THE FIRST BEATLE TO VISIT AMERICA: In 1963, the Beatles remained relatively unknown in the United States. Still able to travel without being recognized, George and his brother Peter visited New York, and more obscurely, Benton, Illinois, where their sister Louise had moved with her Scottish husband, a mining engineer. Harrison even played a gig with a local band, The Four Vests, and Louise set up an interview with a teen radio show—the first radio interview with a Beatle in the U.S.—hosted by 17-year-old Marcia Schafer. She played "From Me to You" and "She Loves You," on the show, perhaps the first Beatles songs ever to hit the airwaves in the U.S.

HE WAS THE FIRST BEATLE TO MEET A U.S. PRESIDENT: At a Dark Horse tour show in Salt Lake City on Nov. 16, 1974, Jack Ford, the son of President Gerald Ford, befriended the former Beatle and invited him to visit the White House. Before a Dec. 13 show in Maryland, Harrison's Oval Office entourage included sitarist Ravi Shankar, saxophonist Tommy Scott, manager Denis O' Brien, publicist Michael Sterling, keyboardist Billy Preston, and George's 65-year-old father, Harold. President Ford gave Harrison a WIN (Whip Inflation Now) button, and in return, he handed the president an "Om" mantra pin.

HE FORMED THE TRAVELING WILBURYS: When Warner Bros. asked Harrison to come up with a B-side for the single "This Is Love" from his 1987 album, *Cloud Nine*, he invited some of his famous friends over to jam: Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison, Jeff Lynne and Tom

WARM WELCOME Keyboardist Billy Preston (below, left) and Harrison visit with President Gerald Ford in the Oval Office during their visit to the White House in 1974.

CHAPTER 14

TREE OF LIFE
Before his death in 2001, Harrison gifted McCartney (left) with an evergreen tree that still grows on Paul's East Sussex estate.

HANDLE WITH CARE
The coat (below) worn by Harrison in the music video for the Traveling Wilburys' "Handle With Care" was up for auction in 2018.

Petty. The five musical greats thought the resultant song "Handle With Care" was too good and decided to form a supergroup. Orbison died of a heart attack in December 1988, two months after the release of the group's first album. *Vol. 1*, but the Wilburys released their second album, cheekily titled *Vol. 3*, in 1990.

HE GAVE PAUL MCCARTNEY A TREE THAT PAUL TALKS TO: Before his death from cancer in November 2001, Harrison gifted McCartney an evergreen coniferous tree. The tree still grows in England near McCartney's Peasmarsh home on his East Sussex estate, and Paul uses it to communicate with his late friend. In December 2020, McCartney revealed on NPR that he calls the tree "George." He added, "As the years go by, every time I look at it, I go, 'That's the tree George gave me.' George has entered that tree for me. I hope he's happy with that."

HE ORGANIZED ONE OF THE FIRST ROCK BENEFITS: On Nov. 11, 1970, Cyclone Bhola slammed into East Pakistan (as Bangladesh was then known) and India's West Bengal, killing an estimated 500,000 people. The next year, with Pakistani relief efforts criticized, the non-contiguous East Pakistan seceded from West Pakistan and became Bangladesh. A civil war and Pakistani genocide against Bengalis exacerbated a humanitarian crisis. Harrison wanted to do something to help. With the assistance of Ravi Shankar, Harrison held the Concert for Bangladesh at Madison Square Garden on Aug. 1, 1971. Featuring Harrison's friends Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan and Billy Preston, the concert raised $243,000 for refugees and is considered the precursor to relief concerts such as 1985's Live Aid.

HE BRIEFLY HELD A REAL JOB: Despite being the youngest Beatle—just 14 when he joined John and Paul in the Quarrymen—for a few months starting in late 1959 Harrison worked as an apprentice electrician at Blacklers department store in Liverpool. (Before closing in 1988, Blacklers was the Liverpudlian version of New York's Macy's.) He took the non-musical gig at 16, after he left school. Harrison made 1 pound, 50 pence per week, and on one payday he used his earnings to purchase a new Futurama guitar. George apparently spent most of his time on the clock playing darts in the store's basement before rushing home to pluck away at his new instrument.

FAB

CHAPTER 15

FINDING PEACE

George Harrison's temporal life was complex, complete and ultimately without regrets

After surviving two major life-threatening events in a short period, Harrison passed away from cancer in 2001.

LASTING MEMORIES
George Harrison and his wife, Olivia, are all smiles as they attend an event in June 2000 (below).

ARMED INTRUDER
Police (far right) guarding the Friar Park property where an intruder attacked the former Beatle in December 1999.

IN JULY 1997, WHILE GEORGE HARRISON GARDENED

at Friar Park beneath a bright summer sun, he wiped sweat from his neck and felt a lump. In August, he underwent clandestine surgery to remove several enlarged lymph nodes. After a biopsy confirmed it was throat cancer, he began radiation therapy in England. A year later, Harrison publicly announced the cancer. Treatment was successful, but the medical scare heralded a physically tumultuous period in Harrison's final years.

At approximately 3:30 a.m. on Dec. 31, 1999, Harrison woke to the sounds of shattered glass at his Friar Park home. When he went to investigate, he saw a knife-wielding intruder standing at the bottom of the stairs. The mentally ill man attacked Harrison, stabbing him multiple times, puncturing his lung. Harrison's wife, Olivia, who had called the police, beat the man with a poker and a table lamp. Harrison underwent emergency surgery for a collapsed lung and recovered. (Olivia suffered minor cuts and bruises.) At the hospital, Harrison maintained his sense of humor: "It wasn't a burglar, and he certainly wasn't auditioning for the Traveling Wilburys," he joked to the hospital chief executive.

Harrison survived two life-threatening events in a short period of time, but by March 2001, his cancer returned, this time in his lungs. Doctors at the Mayo

POLICE
R398 WWL

“

TO DO AS WELL AS I CAN AND ... DIE WITH A PEACEFUL MIND.

”

&
LOVE
ILL ALWAYS
SPIRE US
EET GEORGE
MUSICIAN
SH WITH A LI
1/9/01
Thank you
you really got a hold on me!
forever Love
Nessa Sm
CÍNTIA
Brasil
YOU WANT A REVOLUTION
TOGETH
NESSA & DANNY
Got engaged, here
on ABBEY ROAD
ALL YOU NEED IS
LOVE
22/09/01
Jeff 16/11/01
BE HERE NOW!
PARA LOS
MEMORABLES
BEATLES
MARIA
We will
miss you
Jamie

GEORG
FROM
WAS HERE
THAT ROCKS
BERT
BUZ
BUCK
HERE!!
10/2/01
Daniel
10-10-2001
LET ME
INTRODUCE TO YOU
(MAAIKE & EMILIA)
GONE TROPPO
PRESTO
WE HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY THE

SAYING GOODBYE A shrine to Harrison formed on the wall at Abbey Road Studios in London after news of his passing spread.

Clinic removed a tumor. Within a month, the cancer metastasized throughout his body, including his brain. He was terminally ill. His family remained optimistic that he might recover. Undaunted, Harrison returned to India and bathed in the Ganges River, the traditional Hindu ritual for someone preparing to die. George then proceeded to spend a beautiful summer with the ones he loved as he readied himself to face death with grace and humility.

During his final months, Harrison retraced his life and spent quality time with both Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney. He often spoke about the tedium of being a Beatle, as well as the frustrations—but he never regretted being one of the Fabs, and he cherished the experiences that only four people in the world could ever know.

As Harrison underwent brain treatment in Switzerland, Ringo Starr visited him, and they laughed and joked as they always did whenever they were together. The final Beatles meeting occurred on Nov. 12, 2001: Paul McCartney, Starr, Olivia and Harrison's doctor had lunch at a Manhattan hotel. Then, about 10 days before Harrison's death, McCartney spent a tearful six hours at a Staten Island facility where Harrison received late-stage care. They held hands for the first time in their lives. "We joked about things—just amusing, nutty stuff," Paul later recalled. "It was good. It was like we were dreaming."

In August 1966, when asked about his personal goal, George replied: "To do as well as I can do, whatever I attempt, and someday to die with a peaceful mind." On Nov. 29, 2001, after 36 hours of being in and out of consciousness, Harrison died surrounded by Olivia and son Dhani. He was 58 years old.

In the documentary *Living in the Material World,* Olivia described the moment George left his corporeal form. "It was visible," she said. "Let's just say you wouldn't need to light the room if you were trying to film it. You know, he just lit the room."

George's body was cremated hours later, and within a week, Olivia and Dhani scattered George's ashes at the convergence of the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers in India. "He left this world as he lived in it, conscious of God, fearless of death, and at peace," the Harrison family said in a statement. They closed with George's lasting wish for fans, strangers and everyone: "Love one another."

GEORGE HARRISON

AN 80TH BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE

EDITORIAL DIRECTION BY
10TEN MEDIA, LLC

MANAGING EDITOR
Vickie An

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Ian Knowles

EXECUTIVE EDITORS
Bob Der, Scott Gramling

ART DIRECTOR
Crhistian Rodriguez

DESIGNER
Damian Wilkinson

SENIOR EDITOR
Corinne Cummings

WRITER
Kelvin C. Bias

COPY EDITOR
Monica Riese

RESEARCHER
Meredith Clark

A360 MEDIA

PRESIDENT & CHIEF MEDIA OFFICER
Doug Olson

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Eric Szegda (Consumer Revenue)

VICE PRESIDENTS
Holly Oakes (Consumer Marketing)
Tom Maloney (Consumer Marketing & Sales)

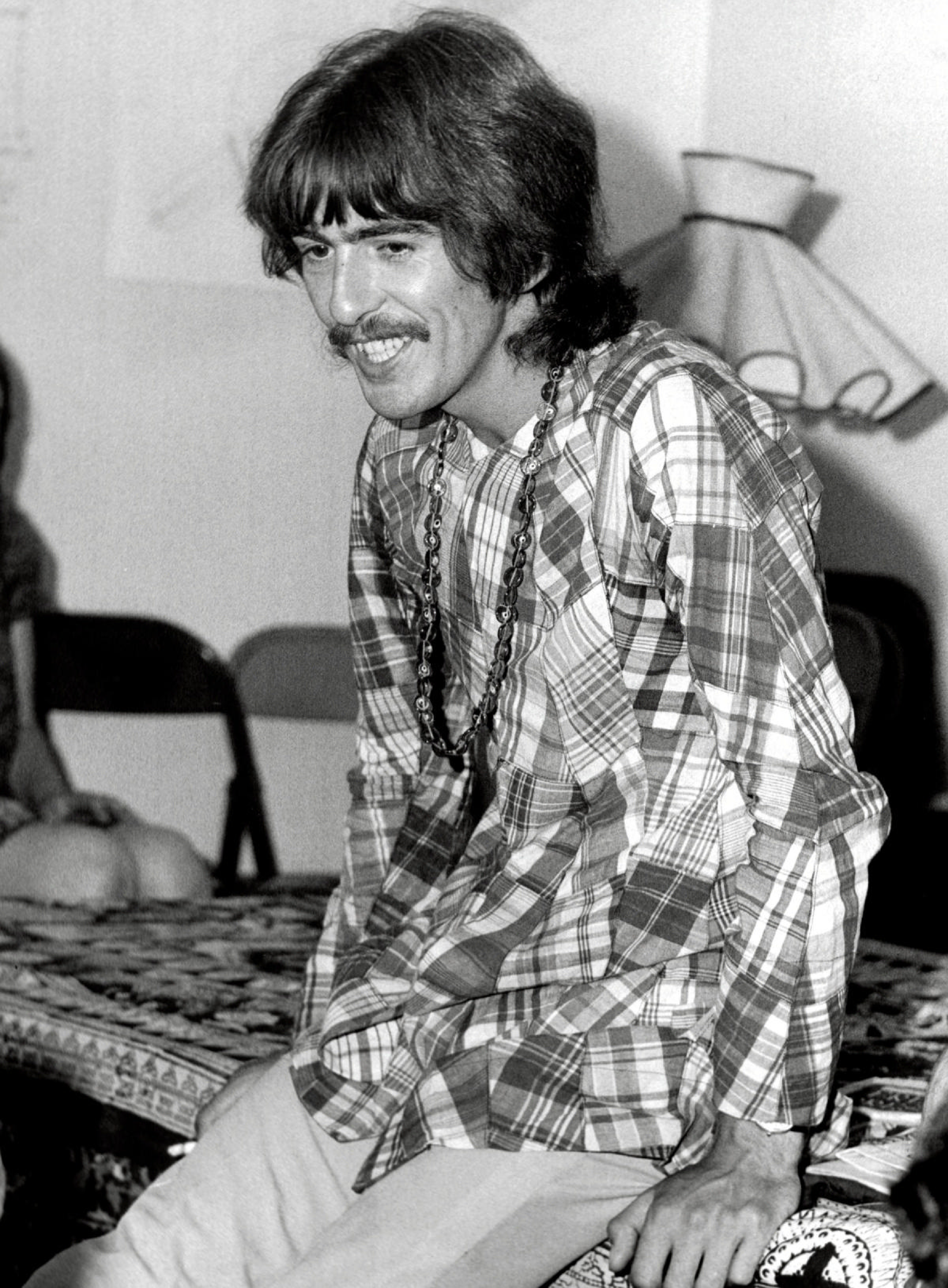
CONSUMER MARKETING DIRECTOR
Melanie Piselli

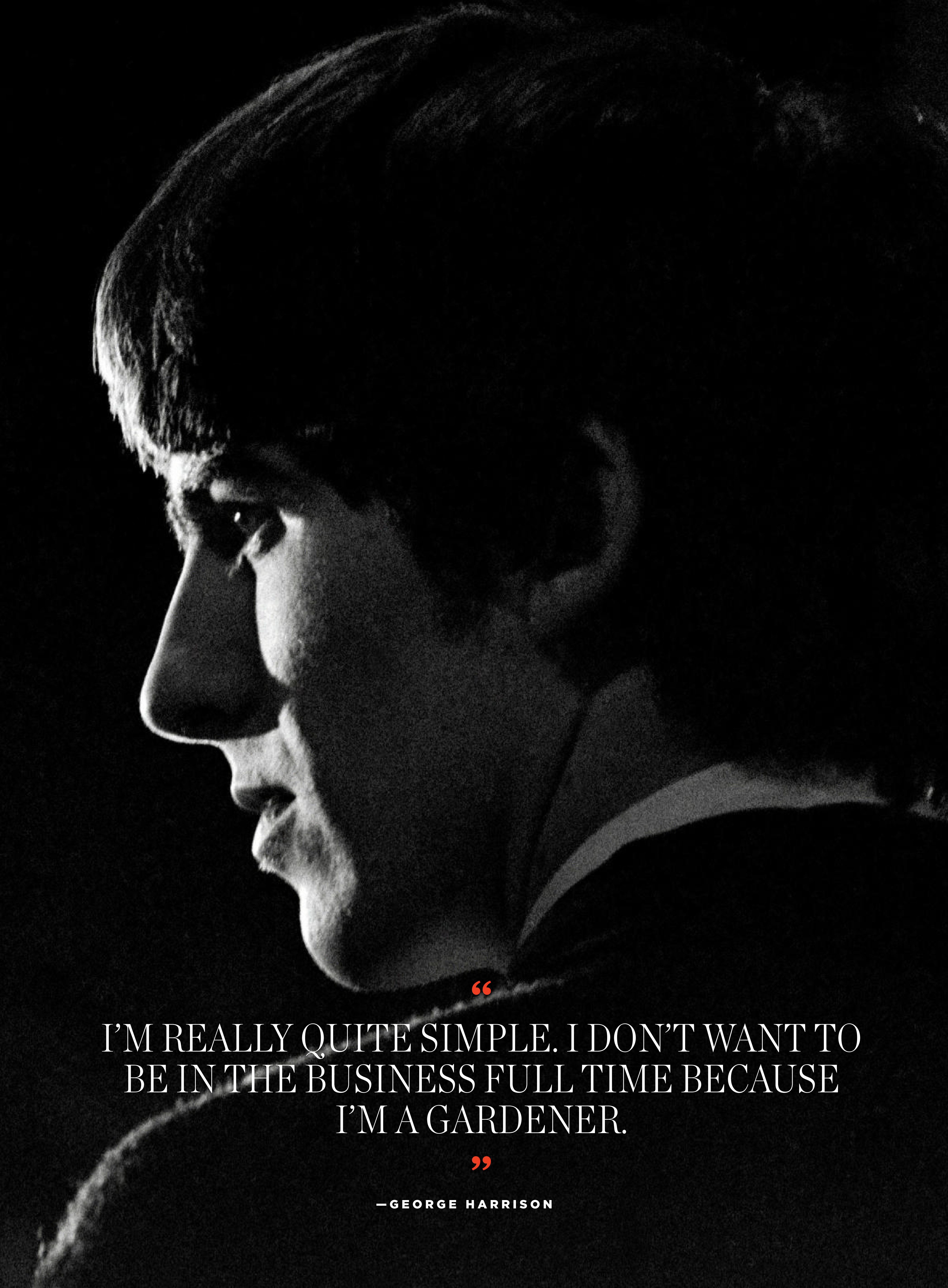
CIRCULATION MANAGER
Bill Fiakos

Published by A360 Media. All rights reserved.
Reproduction in whole or in part without prior permission of the publisher is prohibited. Printed in the U.S.A.

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover: PA Images/Alamy Stock Photo; P1: Mike Mitchell/Paul Popper/Popperfoto/Getty Images; P2-3: Michael Putland/Getty Images; P4-6: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images (2); P9: Express/Getty Images; P10: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images; P11: Keystone/Getty Images; P12: CBS/Getty Images; P14-15: K & K Ulf Kruger OHG/Redferns; P16: Henry Grossman/Mirrorpix/Getty Images; P17: Express Newspapers/Getty Images; P18: David Redfern/Redferns; P20: Mike and Colleen Hayward/Getty Images; P22-23: Keystone/Getty Images; P23: Ron Galella/Ron Galella Collection/Getty Images; P24: Cummings Archives/Redferns/Getty Images; P26-27: Library/Mirrorpix/Getty Images; P28: Jeff Kravitz/FilmMagic; P28-29: Dave Hogan/Getty Images; P30: Val Wilmer/Redferns; P32: Watford/Mirrorpix/Getty Images; P33: Mark and Colleen Hayward/Redferns/Getty Images; P34: Sunday People/Mirrorpix/Getty Images; 35: Rolls Press/Popperfoto/Getty Images; P36: Daily Mirror/Mirrorpix/Getty Images; P38-39: Michael Putland/Hulton Archive/Getty Images P40-41: Bettmann/Getty Images (2); P42: Steel/Mirrorpix/Getty Images; P44: Watford/Mirrorpix/Getty Images; P46-47: Bettmann/Getty Images; P48: David Hume Kennerly/Getty Images; P50-51: Dave Hogan/Getty Images; P52-53: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images; P54: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo; P56-57: RB/Redferns/Getty Images; P58-59: Dave Hogan/Getty Images (2); P60: Wolfgang Kuhn/United Archives/Getty Images; P62-63: M. McKeown/Daily Express/Hulton Archive/Getty Images; P64: John Williams/BIPs/Getty Images; P65: Bettmann/Getty Images; P66: Keystone-France/Gamma-Rapho/Getty Images; P68: Express Newspapers/Getty Images; P69: Michael Ward/Getty Images; P70: Brad Elterman/FilmMagic/Getty Images; P71: Evan Hurd/Corbis/Getty Images; P72: Bettmann/Getty Images; P74: Peter Stone/Mirrorpix/Getty Images; P75-76: No credit (2); P77: Ron Galella/Ron Galella Collection/Getty Images; P78: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images; P80: Avalon/Getty Images; P82-83: Bettmann/Getty Images; P84: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images; P86-87: Bettmann/Getty Images; P88: Keystone/Getty Images; P89: Slaven Vlasic/Getty Images; P90: Rob Verhorst/Redferns/Getty Images; P91: Dave Benett/Getty Images; P92: AFP Photo/Martyn Hayhow/Getty Images; P94-95: Sion Touhig/Getty Images; P97: Cummings Archive/Redferns/Getty Images; P97: Mike Mitchell/Paul Popper/Popperfoto/Getty Images





> “I’M REALLY QUITE SIMPLE. I DON’T WANT TO BE IN THE BUSINESS FULL TIME BECAUSE I’M A GARDENER.”
>
> —**GEORGE HARRISON**